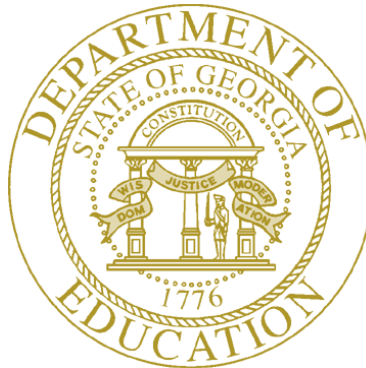


# EXHIBIT 1



# Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS)

## Operations Manual

January 2014

*"Making Education Work for All Georgians"*

1870 Twin Towers East • 205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive • Atlanta, GA 30334 • [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)

## **Foreword**

This manual has been developed to provide guidance and procedures for the operation of the Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS). This manual replaces all previous handbooks and is not intended to create new law or to supplant any federal or state laws, regulations, or requirements. It has been developed to assist fiscal agents, GNETS program staff, local education agencies and personnel in the operation of the GNETS programs and in the provision of services for all students served through GNETS. The manual includes web links, forms, and procedures that may be updated regularly by the Georgia Department of Education and other sources. For additional information or assistance, contact:

Georgia Department of Education  
Division for Special Education Services and Supports  
Suite 1870 Twin Towers East  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
404-656-3963 or  
800-311-3267 – Request Special Education

Deborah Gay, Director  
Division for Special Education Services and Supports

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## **GEORGIA NETWORK FOR EDUCATIONAL AND THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT (GNETS)**

### **Network Description and Purpose**

The Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) is comprised of 24 programs that support the local school districts' continuum of services for students with disabilities, ages 3-21. The programs provide comprehensive educational and therapeutic support services to students who might otherwise require residential or other more restrictive placements due to the severity of one or more of the characteristics of the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD).

GNETS programs provide an array of therapeutic and behavioral supports as well as specialized instruction for students. These supports are designed to assist the student to progress in the general curriculum and graduate ready for work or postsecondary studies. In addition, the GNETS program provides supports to families and works collaboratively with other agencies serving students.

Students are referred by their local school districts through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. An IEP team may consider services by a GNETS program for a child based upon documentation of the severity of the duration, frequency, and intensity of one or more of the characteristics of the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). This documentation must include prior extension of less restrictive services and data that indicate such services have not enabled the child to benefit educationally. Students remain enrolled in their local school districts and local schools are actively involved in the planning and programming for students receiving services through a GNETS program. Exit criteria must be developed upon, or prior to, initiating services through a GNETS program.

Most students served by GNETS programs are those with severe emotional and behavioral disorders. Other eligible students with disabilities may be served in GNETS classes when the frequency, intensity, and duration of their behaviors is such that this placement is deemed by those students' IEP teams to be appropriate to meet the students' needs. Students who are served in GNETS classes are those requiring the intensive therapeutic interventions and educational support that GNETS programs are designed to provide.

## Network Directory of Programs, Districts Served, and Fiscal Agents

PROGRAM NAME AND OFFICE LOCATION	DISTRICTS SERVED
<b>ALPINE PROGRAM</b> P.O.Box 1789 Cleveland, Georgia 30528 (706) 865-2141 Ext. 243/FAX (706) 865-6748 (706) 969-8086 Director Dr. Stacy Benson, Director <a href="mailto:sbenson@pioneerresa.org">sbenson@pioneerresa.org</a>	Banks, Dawson, Franklin, Forsyth, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, and White Counties; Gainesville City
<b>BURWELL PROGRAM</b> 307 Fort Drive LaGrange, Georgia 30240 (706) 884-6001/FAX (706) 882-0907 Steve Rains, Director <a href="mailto:rainss@troup.org">rainss@troup.org</a>	Carroll, Coweta, Heard, Meriwether, and Troup Counties; Carrollton City
<b>CEDARWOOD PROGRAM</b> 98 Barnes Street Baxley, GA 31513 (912) 367-7506/ FAX (912) 367-9649 Jeannie Morris, Director <a href="mailto:jeanniemorris@cedarwoodgnets.org">jeanniemorris@cedarwoodgnets.org</a>	Appling, Bulloch, Candler, Evans, Jeff Davis, Tattnall, Toombs, and Wayne Counties; Vidalia City
<b>COASTAL ACADEMY</b> 3734 Ross Road Brunswick, Georgia 31520 (912) 554-0153 FAX (912) 267-4144 or (912) 554-0153 Lisa Futch, Director <a href="mailto:lfutch@coastalacademygnets.com">lfutch@coastalacademygnets.com</a>	Bryan, Camden, Glynn, Liberty, Long, and McIntosh Counties
<b>COASTAL GEORGIA COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMY</b> 2001 Cynthia Street Savannah, Georgia 31415 (912) 395-5440/FAX (912) 201-5453 Steve Derr, Director <a href="mailto:steve.derr@savannah.chatham.k12.ga.us">steve.derr@savannah.chatham.k12.ga.us</a>	Savannah-Chatham, Effingham County
<b>DEKALB-ROCKDALE PROGRAM</b> 5931 Shadow Rock Dr. Lithonia, Georgia 30058 (678) 676-8102/FAX (678) 676-8110 Desiree Woods, Director <a href="mailto:desiree_d_woods@fc.dekalb.k12.ga.us">desiree_d_woods@fc.dekalb.k12.ga.us</a>	DeKalb and Rockdale Counties; Decatur City
<b>ELAM ALEXANDER ACADEMY</b> 2051 Second Street Macon, Georgia 31201 (478) 779-3930/FAX (478) 779-4821 Lara Sims, Director <a href="mailto:lsims.edservices@bibb.k12.ga.us">lsims.edservices@bibb.k12.ga.us</a>	Bibb, Crawford, Houston, Jones, Monroe, Peach and Twiggs Counties
<b>FLINT AREA LEARNING PROGRAM</b> P. O. Box 729 Cordele, Georgia 31010 (229) 273-5653/FAX (229) 276-0720 Mary Ann Seay, Director <a href="mailto:mseay@crisp.k12.ga.us">mseay@crisp.k12.ga.us</a>	Crisp, Dooley, Macon, Marion, Schley, Sumter, Taylor and Webster Counties

PROGRAM NAME AND OFFICE LOCATION	DISTRICTS SERVED
<b>HARRELL LEARNING CENTER</b> 1215 Bailey Street Suite C Waycross, Georgia 31501 (912) 285-6191/FAX (912) 287-6652 Aubrey Rossignol, Director <a href="mailto:arossignol@okhlc.org">arossignol@okhlc.org</a>	Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Pierce, and Ware Counties
<b>H.A.V.E.N. ACADEMY</b> 1595 Hawthorne Street Smyrna, Georgia 30080 (678) 842-6930 (EXT. 223) FAX (678) 842-6943 Shannon Svetlay <a href="mailto:Shannon.svetlay@cobbk12.org">Shannon.svetlay@cobbk12.org</a>	Cobb and Douglas Counties; Marietta City
<b>HEARTLAND ACADEMY</b> P.O. Box 296 Mt. Vernon, Ga. 30445 (912) 583-4657/ (912) 583-4120 (fax) Joanna Mock, Director <a href="mailto:joannam@hgresa.org">joannam@hgresa.org</a>	Bleckley, Dodge, Laurens, Montgomery, Pulaski, Telfair, Treutlen, Wheeler, and Wilcox Counties; Dublin City
<b>HORIZON ACADEMY</b> 1500A Lankford Drive Valdosta, Georgia 31601 (229) 333-5227/FAX (229) 245-2398 Dr. Samuel Clemons, Director <a href="mailto:samuelclemons@lowndes.k12.ga.us">samuelclemons@lowndes.k12.ga.us</a>	Ben Hill, Berrien, Brooks, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Tift, and Turner Counties: Valdosta City
<b>MAINSTAY ACADEMY</b> 200 A. Z. Kelsey Avenue Griffin, Georgia 30223 (770) 467-6600/FAX (770) 467-6604 Chris Briggs, Director <a href="mailto:chris.briggs@gscs.org">chris.briggs@gscs.org</a>	Butts, Fayette, Henry, Lamar, Newton, Pike, Spalding and Upson Counties
<b>NORTH METRO PROGRAM</b> 601 Beckwith Street SW Atlanta, Georgia 30314 (404) 802-6070/FAX 404-802-6098 Dr. Cassandra Holifield, Director <a href="mailto:Cassandra.holifield@mresa.org">Cassandra.holifield@mresa.org</a>	Fulton County (North), Atlanta Public Schools (North), Gwinnett County, and Buford City
<b>NORTHSTAR EDUCATIONAL AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES</b> 121 D.B. Carroll Street Jasper, Georgia 30143 (706) 253-1790/FAX (706) 253-1795 Dr. Jacqie Neal, Director <a href="mailto:jacqieneal@northstar-gnets.com">jacqieneal@northstar-gnets.com</a>	Fannin, Gilmer, Murray, Pickens, and Whitfield Counties; Dalton City
<b>NORTHWEST GEORGIA EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM</b> P.O. Box 1585 Rome, Georgia 30162-1585 (706) 291-2625 Ext. 11/FAX (706) 291-0109 Greg McElwee, Director <a href="mailto:gmcElwee@nwgnet.org">gmcElwee@nwgnet.org</a>	Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Floyd, Gordon, Haralson, Paulding, Polk, and Walker Counties; Bremen, Calhoun, Cartersville, Chickamauga, Rome and Trion Cities

PROGRAM NAME AND OFFICE LOCATION	DISTRICTS SERVED
<b>OAK TREE PROGRAM</b> 1520 Cordell Avenue Albany, Georgia 31705 (229) 431-1323 Ext. 3638 FAX (229) 483-6350 Dr. Kerrie Miller, Director <a href="mailto:Kerri.miller@docoschools.org">Kerri.miller@docoschools.org</a>	Baker, Calhoun, Dougherty, Early, Lee, Miller, Terrell, and Worth Counties
<b>GNETS of OCONEE</b> P.O. Drawer 1830 Milledgeville, Georgia 31059-1830 (478) 414-2023/FAX (478) 414-2025 Pat Wolf, Director <a href="mailto:Pat.wolf@gnetsofoconee.org">Pat.wolf@gnetsofoconee.org</a>	Baldwin, Hancock, Jasper, Johnson, Putnam, Washington, and Wilkinson Counties
<b>PATHWAYS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM</b> 208 N. Pinetree Blvd. Thomasville Georgia 31792 (229) 225-3910/FAX (229) 225-5283 Jeanene Wallace, Director <a href="mailto:jwier@rose.net">jwier@rose.net</a>	Colquitt, Decatur, Grady, Mitchell, Seminole and Thomas Counties; Pelham City, Thomasville City
<b>RIVER QUEST PROGRAM</b> P.O. Box 385 Midville, Georgia 30441 (478) 589-7310/ FAX (478) 589-7038 Karen Ross, Director <a href="mailto:kross@emanuel.k12.ga.us">kross@emanuel.k12.ga.us</a>	Burke, Emanuel, Glascock, Jefferson, Jenkins and Screven Counties
<b>RUTLAND ACADEMY</b> 1250 Oglethorpe Avenue Athens, Georgia 30606 (706) 549-3030 Ext. 402/FAX (706) 613-7142 Najma Hunter, Director <a href="mailto:najma.hunter@rutlandacademy.org">najma.hunter@rutlandacademy.org</a>	Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton Counties, Commerce, Jefferson, and Social Circle Cities
<b>SAND HILLS PROGRAM</b> 3110 Tate Road Suite B Augusta, Georgia 30906 (706) 796-7791/FAX (706) 737-791-7793 Kathy Lewis-Hawkins, Director <a href="mailto:Lewiska@rcboe.org">Lewiska@rcboe.org</a>	Lincoln, McDuffie, Richmond, Taliaferro, Warren and Wilkes Counties
<b>SOUTH METRO PROGRAM</b> 5277 Ash Street Forest Park, Georgia 30297 (770)472-2860/FAX(770-472-2858 Derrick Gilchrist, Director <a href="mailto:derrick.gilchrist@clayton.k12.ga.us">derrick.gilchrist@clayton.k12.ga.us</a>	Clayton and South Fulton Counties and Atlanta Public Schools (South)
<b>WOODALL PROGRAM</b> 4312 Harrison Avenue Columbus, Georgia 31904 (706) 748-3166/FAX (706) 748-3171 Geraldine Middleton, Director <a href="mailto:middleton.geraldine@muscogee.k12.ga.us">middleton.geraldine@muscogee.k12.ga.us</a>	Chattahoochee, Clay, Harris, Muscogee, Quitman, Randolph, Stewart and Talbot Counties

## **GNETS State Rule 160-4-7-.15**

### **State Rule 160-4-7-.15 Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS)**

#### **(1) PROGRAM DEFINITION AND PURPOSE.**

- (a) The Psychoeducational Network shall be known as the Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS). GNETS programs support the Local Education Agencies (LEA) continuum of services by providing comprehensive special education and therapeutic support for the children served. The purpose of the GNETS is to prevent children from requiring residential or other more restrictive placements by offering cost-effective comprehensive services in local areas. Families have the opportunity to be engaged in all aspects of service planning. Child specialists (educators, psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, behavior support specialists, or etc.) from a variety of professions collaborate on behalf of the children served.
- (b) All programs may serve children ages 3 through 21 years by the program staff in classes, with direct therapeutic services, evaluation and assessment or other services as appropriate.

#### **(2) ELIGIBILITY AND PLACEMENT.**

- (a) An IEP team may consider in-class services by a GNETS program for a child with an emotional and behavioral disorder based upon documentation of the severity of the duration, frequency and intensity of one or more of the characteristics of the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). This documentation must include prior extension of less restrictive services and data that indicate such services have not enabled the child to benefit educationally.
- (b) For children receiving in-class services, local schools are actively involved and exit criteria are developed upon entry into the GNETS program.

#### **(3) OPERATIONAL REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES.**

- (a) **Department responsibilities.** In compliance with a provision of the budget for the operation of GNETS, the department shall receive funds appropriated by the Georgia General Assembly. The department shall:
  - 1. Develop regulations and procedures pertaining to the operation of GNETS programs, subject to review and approval of the state board.
  - 2. Review proposals for funding and make recommendations to the state board.
  - 3. Award funding to approved fiscal agents for the operation of GNETS programs.

4. Ensure that all GNETS programs have an on-going system for documenting effectiveness and program improvement based on GaDOE requirements and guidance from stakeholders.

**(b) Fiscal agent responsibilities.**

1. If a majority of the LEAs served by the GNETS program desire to change the fiscal agent, the vote shall be taken no later than April 1 to be effective for the ensuing fiscal year. The fiscal agent responsibility may be transferred to a regional education service agency (RESA) or a LEA provided the new fiscal agent agrees to serve for a minimum of three years. The fiscal agent shall do the following.
  - (i) Serve as fiscal agent for the receipt and disbursement of all grant funds.
  - (ii) Transfer funds to restricted program accounts upon receipt of all grant funds, including maintenance and operation, instructional materials and media and sick leave.
  - (iii) Maintain appropriate bookkeeping procedures to ensure the expenditure of funds as indicated in the approved proposal. (For information concerning procedures, the *Financial Management for Georgia Local Units of Administration* shall be used.)
  - (iv) Provide appropriate information as required by the department, including the following.
    - (I) March, October and annual reports of services for children.
    - (II) Program accountability data.
    - (III) Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Plans.
    - (IV) Financial reports.
    - (V) Annual demographic data.

**(c) Advisory board.**

1. The advisory board comprised of the superintendents or their designees of the LEAs served, shall meet at least quarterly.
2. Responsibilities of the board shall include, but are not limited to, the following.
  - (i) Review and endorse the proposal for funding, including service delivery model, staffing pattern and budget.
  - (ii) Review service delivery model and recommendations for program improvement.

- (iii) Review program data quarterly

**(d) Budget/fiscal management.**

1. Guidelines for the budget are established to cover all areas of expenditures.
  - (i) Budgets shall be determined annually according to appropriations and population to be served by each program.
  - (ii) Management of program budgets shall be consistent with state fiscal policy.
  - (iii) Deviations in the project budget shall be approved by the fiscal agent and submitted to the department for approval as outlined in the proposal guidelines.
  - (iv) Indirect cost is only allowable on the state grant and shall be calculated using one percent. Indirect cost may be negotiated for providing such services as accounting, data processing and purchasing.

**(e) Budget/personnel.**

1. The procedure outlined below shall be used for personnel in programs.
  - (i) Minimum salary schedules for professionals shall be consistent with either the Professional Standards Commission requirements or Georgia Merit System rating in the area of job responsibility.
  - (ii) Any positions established that are not described in the approved proposal shall be justified in writing with a complete job description attached and submitted for prior approval to the department.
  - (iii) Personnel employed as teachers shall meet the state certification requirements. Others shall meet licensing or certification requirements in their respective professional area, e.g., psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or be eligible for an appropriate State of Georgia Merit System rating.
  - (iv) Sufficient personnel to operate a GNETS program shall be employed and described in the proposal approved by the fiscal agent and LEAs served. These shall include sufficient leadership and supervisory personnel, instructional staff to include teachers and paraprofessionals, and therapeutic support staff.

**(f) Budget/operation.**

1. The procedure outlined below shall be followed in regard to costs of operation and equipment.
  - (i) Travel expense reimbursement shall be based on state travel regulations for LEAs.

- (ii) State funds shall not be utilized to buy snacks or rewards for children.
- (iii) Installation of equipment or renovation of a facility on property not legally the property of the fiscal agent shall be prohibited.
- (iv) Insurance coverage may be contracted for program contents.
- (v) Insurance coverage may be contracted for liability on pupil transportation vehicles unless already covered by pupil transportation grants.
- (vi) Insurance coverage may be contracted for professional liability and/or accident and health when provided to all staff by the fiscal agent.

**(g) Program operation.**

1. The procedure outlined below shall be followed in regard to program operation.
  - (i) Classes shall operate a minimum of 180 days each fiscal year and may operate up to 200 days. The recommended maximum class size for preschool, elementary and middle school classes is eight. The recommended maximum class size for high school classes is ten.
  - (ii) GNETS programs shall utilize evidence-based positive behavioral interventions, supports and other strategies designed to increase children's resilience and social emotional competence.
  - (iii) The academic curriculum for all children shall be Georgia's general education curriculum.

**(4) This rule shall become effective July 1, 2007.**

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-152; 20-2-240; 20-2-270; 20-2-270.1; 20-2-272; 20-2-274.

**[\[RETURN TO TOP OF DOCUMENT\]](#)**

## GNETS SERVICES

### Initial Services

An IEP team, which includes GNETS personnel, may consider services by a GNETS program based upon documentation of the severity of the duration, frequency, and intensity of one or more characteristics of the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Other eligible students with disabilities may receive GNETS services when the frequency, intensity, and duration of their behaviors is such that this service is deemed by those students' IEP teams to be appropriate to meet the students' needs. Students who are served directly in GNETS classes are those requiring the intensive therapeutic interventions and educational support that GNETS programs are designed to provide.

Documentation must include evidence that appropriate research-based interventions were provided for a significant length of time and data that indicate such interventions have not enabled the child to benefit educationally. Additional evaluations prior to placement may also be necessary.

Placement in a GNETS program is determined by the student's IEP team. GNETS directors and special education directors should collaborate both to ensure that GNETS program staff are included in IEP meetings when GNETS services are being considered and to develop a process to consider all available data and information in order to facilitate a student's entrance and exit from a GNETS program.

### Frequently Asked Questions About Initial GNETS Services

*Is a new eligibility required prior to receiving GNETS services?*

Except in the most extreme and rare instances, students should already be eligible for and be receiving special education services prior to consideration for GNETS placement, so a new eligibility would not be required. A new or updated eligibility must only be completed if a student is receiving special education services for the first time (rare) or if the committee has determined a new eligibility for EBD. Students with eligibilities for autism, other health impairment, and EBD as a secondary eligibility may be served in GNETS classes.

*May a principal, special education director, or tribunal committee make the decision to change a student's placement to a GNETS program?*

No. Entry into a GNETS program is an IEP team decision and is based on the student's needs as identified in the IEP. When GNETS services are considered, personnel from the local GNETS program must be part of the IEP team.

*May students with special education eligibilities other than Emotional and Behavioral Disorders receive in-class services by a GNETS program?*

Yes. Placement decisions by the IEP team are made based on the therapeutic and behavioral needs identified in the student's IEP and the team's determination that the GNETS services are required to meet those needs. Some students meet eligibility requirements in more than one category and

may be served in the environment determined by the IEP committee suited to meet those needs when there is documented evidence of one or more of the characteristics of emotional disturbance.

## **Individual Education Program (IEP) Specific Components**

Each student served in a Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) program must have been through due process procedures and have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) documenting placement in the program. IEPs for GNETS students should be written in the IEP platform of the school district of the student's residence for the initial IEP, as well as all ensuing IEPs.

Required members of the IEP team are specified in the Georgia Special Education Rules. The school district is responsible for developing the IEP, but GNETS should participate in the development of the IEP. An IEP should not be developed that specifies GNETS services without involvement of the GNETS staff; and once a student is placed in a GNETS program, school district staff should be active participants in the IEP development process.

Families also have an important role in the IEP development. This involvement may be challenging when the GNETS program is located outside of the school district. All efforts should be made to support family involvement in IEP meetings, including holding meetings in the LEA and/or the school where the student resides.

For complete information on Georgia's Special Education Rules and the IEP, please consult the [Special Education Implementation Manual](#).

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Individualized Educational Programs**

*Should IEPs remain on the LEA IEP forms while they're being served by a GNETS Program?*

Yes, GNETS students' IEPs should be developed with the LEA representatives and on the LEA IEP forms.

*If a student is receiving services through a GNETS Program, must an LEA representative and general education teacher attend the IEP meetings?*

Yes. The LEA is responsible for the provision of FAPE to all students, including those served by a GNETS Program; and participation in the development and revision of the IEP is required. Federal regulations and Georgia Special Education Rules require the IEP team to consider the full continuum of placement options. There are very few circumstances where a general education teacher would not be needed to consider the full continuum and participation in general education.

*Who may serve as the LEA representative at a GNETS IEP meeting?*

The LEA representative must be employed by the LEA and meet the following criteria:

- Is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;
- Is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and
- Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the LEA.

## **FAPE and the LEA**

When a student receives services through a GNETS program, the responsibility for the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) remains with the LEA. All students served through a GNETS program must remain enrolled in the LEA where they reside; and the responsibility for providing any services outside of that IEP, such as Extended School Year Services, Summer School, Hospital/Homebound Services, Residential Services, or home-based instruction remains with the LEA.

The LEA representative must be present at IEP meetings and must participate in the development of the IEP, including the placement decision. Development and implementation of the IEP is still the responsibility of the LEA and, therefore, should be developed using the LEA forms and/or any electronic or web-based IEP programs.

The LEA and the GNETS program should work collaboratively to ensure that the therapeutic and educational services outlined in the IEP are provided to the student. The full continuum of placement options must be considered at IEP meetings (including part time placement in a GNETS program), and that decision must be based upon the student's needs and not the resources available in the LEA. If the IEP team determines that the GNETS placement is no longer appropriate or that a student requires a more restrictive setting such as residential placement or Hospital Homebound Services, the LEA is responsible for providing those services.

### **Frequently Asked Questions about FAPE and the LEA**

*If a GNETS student requires related services, who is responsible for providing these services?*

GNETS directors and special education directors should collaborate to ensure that related services are provided. Ultimately, the school district is responsible for the provision of related services.

*When a student is receiving services through a GNETS program, who is responsible for providing Extended School Year Services (ESY)?*

The school district is responsible for providing Extended School Year Services to students placed in GNETS programs. In some instances, the district may contract with GNETS teachers to provide ESY to students served in GNETS.

## **Exit Criteria**

Georgia's Special Education Rule 160-4-7-.15 requires that exit criteria be developed upon entry into the GNETS program as part of the IEP process. Exit criteria are based upon the behaviors that necessitated GNETS services and the data that supported the placement. If a student later exhibits behaviors with severity of duration, frequency, and intensity that were not present upon entry into GNETS, exit criteria may be revised to include those behaviors. Exit criteria should include the following:

- Target behavior described in measurable and observable terms
- Data on target behavior at initial placement

- Criteria for target behavior for consideration of exit from GNETS program
- Method of data collection/evaluation

Progress toward meeting the exit criteria should be regularly monitored, and instruction should be adjusted if progress is not being made. As students' progress toward meeting exit criteria, GNETS personnel should collaborate with the LEA representative to assist in planning for a smooth transition back to the LEA.

### **Frequently Asked Questions about Exit Criteria**

*How should the behavior that necessitated consideration of a placement in GNETS be documented?*

IEP teams should use direct observation and data collection methods as well as any indirect methods of assessment (e.g., rating scales, interviews, etc.) to document the severity of the duration, frequency, and intensity of one or more characteristics of the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Direct observation data can be in the form of frequency, intensity, duration, rate, and/or latency data. It is recommended that direct observation data be graphed for team analysis as well as for assisting with the establishment of exit criteria. Documentation must also include evidence that appropriate research-based interventions were provided for a significant length of time and data that indicate such interventions have not enabled the child to benefit educationally. Additional evaluations prior to placement may also be necessary to document the presence of emotional disturbance and the need for therapeutic interventions. The LEA should use its existing IEP forms with attachments for this documentation.

*May a student who has met exit criteria but still has some behavioral problems be prevented from returning to his LEA?*

If a student is no longer exhibiting the severity of the duration, frequency, and intensity of the behavior that necessitated GNETS services, a return to the LEA should be considered by the IEP team. Students coming from GNETS classes should not be held to a higher behavioral standard than their peers in the LEA. If a student still has some behavioral problems, the IEP, the Behavior Intervention Plan, and a well formulated transition plan should be developed to provide the necessary supports for students.

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## **PROGRAM OPERATION PROCEDURES**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The successful operation of a GNETS program requires a collaborative partnership between the Georgia Department of Education, fiscal agents, and the GNETS programs. Local school district personnel also have a key role in supporting the program to ensure that students receive the therapeutic and educational services identified on their IEPs.

The [Georgia Rule for Special Education 160-4-7-.15](#) Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) specifies the responsibilities of the GaDOE and the fiscal agents. The responsibilities of the GNETS Advisory Boards are also specified in this rule. The guidelines outlined in this document are based on the GNETS rule.

#### **Georgia Department of Education**

Each year, the GaDOE requests funds from the Governor and the Georgia General Assembly for operation of GNETS programs based on a funding formula by the GaDOE, the Office of Planning and Budget, and key stakeholders. The funding formula includes state funds as well as the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act funds, which are used to supplement the state funds. Once funds are appropriated by the General Assembly for the operation of GNETS, the State Board of Education approves the allocation of the funds based on the formula for each GNETS program.

GaDOE provides annual program applications for funding that are submitted to the department by the fiscal agents. The proposals include program descriptions, budgets for state and federal allocations, and assurances from fiscal agents and participating school districts. Additional documents may be required and are identified in the application template provided by the GaDOE. The GaDOE reviews the applications, including the budgets, and approves them prior to allocation of funds to the fiscal agents for the operation of the GNETS programs.

The GaDOE is responsible for implementing and ensuring that GNETS programs have an on-going system for documenting effectiveness and program improvement based on GaDOE requirements and guidance from stakeholders. Procedures for evaluating program effectiveness and program improvement are outlined in subsequent sections of this manual.

#### **Fiscal Agent Responsibilities**

According to Georgia code O.C.G.A. § 20-2-270.1, local school districts or Regional Education Service Agencies may serve as fiscal agents for GNETS programs. If a majority of the LEAs served by the GNETS program desire to change the fiscal agent, the vote shall be taken by the superintendents in the area served by the GNETS program no later than April 1, to be effective for the following fiscal year. The fiscal agent responsibility may be transferred to a regional education service agency (RESA) or an LEA, provided the new fiscal agent agrees to serve for a minimum of three years.

GNETS fiscal agents are responsible for receiving and disbursing funds allocated by the GaDOE for the operation of the GNETS programs. The fiscal agent will transfer allocated funds to appropriate, restricted program accounts, including but not limited to maintenance and operation, instructional materials, and media. The fiscal agent is responsible for implementing appropriate bookkeeping procedures to ensure the expenditure of funds as indicated in the approved application. For information concerning procedures, the [\*Financial Management for Georgia Local Units of Administration\*](#) shall be used.

The fiscal agent must provide appropriate information as required by the department, including the following:

- Program accountability data
- Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Plans
- Financial reports

The fiscal agent works with GNETS program directors to recruit, hire, and provide human resource support services to staff, as well as technical assistance and financial management for the program. For additional fiscal agent responsibilities, please refer to the Fiscal Agent Assurances included in [Appendix B](#) of this manual.

### **Advisory Board Responsibilities**

Each GNETS program must establish an advisory board that is comprised of the superintendents or their designees of the school districts served by the GNETS program. The advisory board must meet at least quarterly, but it may meet more frequently if needed. The advisory board is responsible for reviewing the proposals for funding, which include, but are not limited to, service delivery models, staffing patterns, and budgets. The advisory board is also responsible for reviewing program data on a quarterly basis, and it should make recommendations to the GNETS director and fiscal agent on program improvement.

### **Local Education Agency Responsibilities**

When a student receives services through a GNETS program, the responsibility for the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) remains with the LEA. The LEA is responsible for the development, implementation, and oversight of the IEP. All students served through a GNETS program must remain enrolled in the LEA where they reside; and the responsibility for providing any services in the IEP, such as Extended School Year Services, Summer School, Hospital/Homebound Services, Residential Services, or home-based instruction remains with the LEA.

The LEA will coordinate with the GNETS program to ensure that all student data are accurately entered into the Student Record and Student Information Systems and reported in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.07.

The LEA will collaborate with the GNETS director to ensure that textbooks, Georgia Performance Standards curriculum materials and resources, technology and its support, and state and local testing materials are provided to its students served in GNETS.

LEA staff will also coordinate with the GNETS director to ensure that appropriate facilities will be provided and maintained in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

The LEA will coordinate with the GNETS program to ensure that transportation is provided to students participating in the GNETS programs. The LEA has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that its students receive the necessary transportation.

In addition, the LEA will coordinate with the GNETS to ensure that related services are provided when these services are determined to be educationally necessary by the student's IEP team. The LEA, however, has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that a student receives all services necessary under the student's IEP, including but not limited to related services such as occupational and/or physical therapy, Extended School Year (ESY), and/or assistive technology.

## **Budget and Fiscal Guidance**

### **Allocations and Budgets**

Funding for GNETS is provided using a combination of state and federal funds. The funding formula is based on the appropriations and populations to be served by each program. It includes state funds as well as the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act funds that are used to supplement the state funds. Once the GaDOE funds are appropriated by the General Assembly for the operation of GNETS, the State Board of Education approves the allocation of the funds based on the formula as it applies to each GNETS program. LEAs may need to contribute additional funds and/or in-kind services to the GNETS program to ensure that their students have access to the educational and therapeutic services outlined in the students' IEPs.

Each year GNETS directors work with their fiscal agents as part of the consolidated application process to submit state and federal budgets to the GaDOE for approval. The State Legislature determines the budget annually for all educational services. The final budget approval process usually happens in March or April of each year. Therefore, GNETS programs and their fiscal agents must begin the budget planning process based upon the previous fiscal year's funding and make adjustments when final allocations are announced by GaDOE.

### **Fiscal Management**

The following budget guidance is provided based on the GNETS rule adopted by the Georgia Department of Education:

- State funds may not be carried over to the next fiscal year.
- The allowed amount of federal carry over shall be determined by the GaDOE on an annual basis.

- Management of the program budgets must be consistent with state fiscal policy.
- Any deviations or amendments to the GNETS budget shall be approved by the fiscal agent and submitted to the department for approval.
- Either indirect cost OR billing for services such as accounting, data processing, purchasing, rent, etc., may be utilized but not both. Indirect costs may not exceed 1% of state allocated funds for GNETS.

## **Personnel**

GNETS programs work with their fiscal agents and participating LEAs to recruit and hire highly qualified staff to meet the educational and therapeutic needs of their students. GNETS staff include, but are not limited to, administrators, teachers, social workers, psychologists, behavior interventionists, and paraprofessionals. In center-based programs, staff may also include custodians and other maintenance personnel. Some GNETS programs contract with individuals such as psychiatrists to provide therapeutic services.

GNETS programs must employ or contract with the educational and therapeutic staff needed to operate the program. In some instances, LEAs employ staff working in GNETS programs as a result of collaboration between GNETS programs and fiscal agents. GNETS programs may also collaborate with private and public community-based mental health providers to ensure that their students receive needed therapeutic services.

The GNETS rule adopted by the State Board of Education provides the following guidance for employing personnel in GNETS programs:

- The minimum salary schedules for professionals shall be consistent with either the Professional Standards Commission requirements or Georgia Merit System rating in the area of job responsibility.
- Any positions established that are not described in the approved proposal shall be justified in writing, with a complete job description attached, and submitted for prior approval to the department.
- Personnel employed as teachers shall meet the state certification requirements. Others shall meet licensing or certification requirements in their respective professional area, (e.g., psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker) or be eligible for an appropriate State of Georgia Merit System rating.
- Sufficient personnel to operate a GNETS program shall be employed and described in the proposal approved by the fiscal agent and LEAs served. These shall include sufficient leadership and supervisory personnel, instructional staff to include teachers and paraprofessionals, and therapeutic support staff.

Annual assurance forms submitted by the fiscal agents also require that GNETS fiscal agents will ensure that all employees of the GNETS program or any person with unsupervised access to students are fingerprinted as required by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211(e).

## **Operational Expenses and Equipment**

The GNETS rule adopted by the State Board of Education includes the following procedures regarding operational expenses and equipment for GNETS programs:

- Travel expense reimbursement shall be based on state travel regulations for LEAs.
- State funds shall not be utilized to buy snacks or rewards for children.
- Installation of equipment or renovation of a facility on property not legally the property of the fiscal agent shall be prohibited.
- Insurance coverage may be contracted for program contents.
- Insurance coverage may be contracted for liability on pupil transportation vehicles unless already covered by pupil transportation grants.
- Insurance coverage may be contracted for professional liability and/or accident and health when provided to all staff by the fiscal agent.

When budgeting and expending GNETS funds, GNETS and their fiscal agents must comply with the above guidance. Additional information regarding budgets and purchases is included in the fiscal agent assurances that are signed each year by the fiscal agents.

## **Program Operation**

GNETS programs provide comprehensive special education and therapeutic services for students based on documentation of the severity of the duration, frequency, and intensity of one or more of the characteristics of the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders.

GNETS directors collaborate with special education directors from participating LEAs to ensure that the needed therapeutic and educational services are available to students served in the GNETS program. GNETS programs may provide evaluative, consultative, and/or in-class services to the LEA. Standards of practice were established through a strategic planning process with input from GaDOE, GNETS Directors and a GNETS Steering Committee.

### **Standards of Practice for all GNETS Programs**

- 1. Instruction in grade level Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) and the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS).**
- 2. Implementation of Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI).**

3. **Staff training, support and supervision in de-escalation techniques and the use of restraint.**
4. **Staff expertise in conducting Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA) and in developing Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP).**
5. **Use of the Developmental Teaching Objectives and Rating Forms - Revised, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (DTORF-R) for evaluation and program planning.**
6. **Use of the Assessment of Basic Language and Literacy Skills (ABLLS) for evaluation and planning.**
7. **Implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support (PBIS).**

### **Instructional Time**

Classes shall operate a minimum of 180 days each fiscal year and may operate up to 200 days (some variations of this requirement may occur if participating LEA have been approved for a modified calendar.) The length of the school day must not be shortened for students participating in GNETS programs. The school year and school day time requirements remain the same for students in GNETS programs as for all students in Georgia.

### **Class Size**

Students are considered for placement in GNETS programs due to the severity of their emotional and behavioral disorders. Consequently, the teacher to student ratio supports a smaller class size to enhance the implementation of the required therapeutic and educational interventions. The recommended maximum class size for preschool, elementary, and middle school classes is eight students. The recommended maximum class size for high school classes is ten.

### **Academic Instruction**

Students receiving services in a GNETS class receive academic instruction based upon the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. Information regarding academic instruction for students in Georgia is available on the [Curriculum and Instruction](#) page on the GaDOE website.

GNETS staff must be trained in the delivery of Georgia's curriculum, which is based on the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. Program directors are responsible for ensuring fidelity of implementation of the educational and therapeutic interventions and should work with staff to monitor student progress and make changes in programming as needed.

### **Therapeutic Interventions**

The GNETS rule states that GNETS programs shall utilize evidence-based positive behavioral interventions, supports, and other strategies designed to increase children's resilience and social emotional competence. All programs implement the Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support (PBIS) framework and provide individualized and group therapeutic and behavioral interventions, as determined by student need. Staff must be trained in the therapeutic interventions that are utilized in the program. Program directors are responsible for ensuring fidelity of implementation

of the therapeutic interventions and should work with staff to monitor student progress and to make changes in programming as needed.

### **Mental Health Collaboration**

GNETS programs provide instructional settings in local areas to students who might otherwise require residential or other more restrictive placements due to the severity of one or more of the characteristics of the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Therefore, collaborating with mental health providers is expected as part of the educational services provided in GNETS to address students' social and emotional well-being. Each GNETS program is encouraged to include its local mental health agency on its stakeholder team and work collaboratively to provide students with access to mental health services on a regular basis as part of the mission of GNETS.

For more information about mental health services for children and adolescents in Georgia go to the [Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities](#) website.

Additional requirements are included in the fiscal agent assurances that are signed by fiscal agents each year.

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## APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

### Annual Application for Funding Requirements

Each year, within the timelines provided by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), GNETS programs must submit a program application for funding in addition to their state and federal budgets. The program application is a detailed document that outlines the proposed operation of the GNETS program for the upcoming fiscal year. State and federal funds are made available after the application and budgets have been approved and all signed assurances are on file at the GaDOE.

Programs provide information in the following sections:

*Program projections*

- Locations and addresses of all GNETS classes
- The number and grade level of classes at each site
- The number of teachers and paraprofessionals at each site
- A description of the collaboration and inclusion planned for classes on age-appropriate regular school campuses
- The rationale for center-based locations and a description of how students have access to general education classes and peers

*Staffing pattern*

- Listing of all positions by funding source (state or federal funds)
- Listing of any contracted positions with name and nature of work

*Therapeutic interventions used consistently within the program and how fidelity of implementation is monitored*

*Description of collaboration with local public and private mental health providers*

*Positive behavioral interventions*

*Personnel list*

The following documents must also be submitted with the application or made available upon request each year:

1. Assurance statements from the fiscal agent

These assurances outline the responsibilities of the RESA or LEA receiving the funds from the GaDOE for the operation of the GNETS program. The assurances include program specific assurances as well as general education and special education assurances included in the consolidated application.

2. Assurance statements from each special education director and superintendent of all Local Education Agencies (LEA) served  
These assurances outline the responsibilities of the LEA that places students in a GNETS program.
3. Written procedures governing the purchasing of goods and services when using state and federal grant funds (only updates or revisions after initial submission)
4. Written policies regarding nepotism (only updates or revisions after initial submission)
5. Written procedures regarding the use of seclusion and restraint (only updates or revisions after initial submission)
6. Written procedures for reporting suspected child abuse or mistreatment (only updates or revisions after initial submission)
7. Letter from fiscal agent containing the amount of indirect cost (if charged) and the purpose of the charge
8. Safe School Plan for Center based programs (only updates or revisions after initial submission)
9. School Calendar(s) for all sites

Directions and sample forms needed for completing the Annual Program Application are located in [Appendix A](#) of these guidelines. Sample assurance forms from fiscal agents and participating school districts are included in [Appendix B](#).

Fiscal Year Annual Applications for Funding will be submitted each year with the GNETS budgets via the GaDOE Portal after preliminary review and feedback from GaDOE staff. Budget allocations, instructions, and forms are posted on the [Budget, Grants, Consolidated Application](#) page on the GaDOE website each year.

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## STUDENT AND STAFF SAFETY

### School Safety

Safety of students, staff, and the public is of paramount importance and is a top priority for GNETS programs and all schools in Georgia. Each center-based GNETS program is required to have a Safe Schools Plan and to report any updates to the plan at least annually to the Georgia Department of Education. Safe Schools Plans will not be required for GNETS classes in public school buildings when a plan has been completed by the school. In addition, center-based GNETS programs are assessed on a rotating basis by the Safe and Drug Free Schools staff from the Georgia Department of Education using the School Safety Assessment Instrument. Please see the School Safety Assessment posted on the GaDOE web site, [School Safety Assessment](#). Following the completion of the School Safety Assessment, a report summarizing the assessment results as well as commendations and suggested recommendations will be provided to the GNETS program director and fiscal agent.

### State BOE Rule 160-5-1-.35: Seclusion and Restraint For All Students

#### (1) DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Chemical restraint** – any medication that is used to control behavior or restrict the student’s freedom of movement that is not a prescribed treatment for the student’s medical or psychiatric condition. Use of chemical restraint is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs.
- (b) **Mechanical restraint** – the use of any device or material attached to or adjacent to a student’s body that is intended to restrict the normal freedom of movement and which cannot be easily removed by the student. The term does not include an adaptive or protective device recommended by a physician or therapist when used as recommended by the physician or therapist to promote normative body positioning and physical functioning, and/or to prevent self injurious behavior. The term also does not include seatbelts and other safety equipment when used to secure students during transportation. Use of Mechanical restraint is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs.
- (c) **Physical restraint** – direct physical contact from an adult that prevents or significantly restricts a student’s movement. The term physical restraint does not include prone restraint, mechanical restraint, or chemical restraint. Additionally, physical restraint does not include: providing limited physical contact and/or redirection to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing guidance to a location, or providing comfort.
- (d) **Prone restraint** – a specific type of restraint in which a student is intentionally placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student’s body to keep the student in the prone position. Use of prone restraint is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs.

- (e) **Seclusion** – a procedure that isolates and confines the student in a separate area until he or she is no longer an immediate danger to himself/herself or others. The seclusion occurs in a specifically constructed or designated room or space that is physically isolated from common areas and from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion may also be referred to as monitored seclusion, seclusion timeout, or isolated timeout. Seclusion does not include situations in which a staff member trained in the use of de-escalation techniques or restraint is physically present in the same unlocked room as the student, time-out as defined in paragraph (1)(g) of this rule, in-school suspension, detention, or a student-requested break in a different location in the room or in a separate room. Use of seclusion is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs.
- (f) **Time-out** – a behavioral intervention in which the student is temporarily removed from the learning activity but in which the student is not confined.

## (2) REQUIREMENTS

- (a) The use of seclusion is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs.
- (b) The use of prone restraint is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs.
- (c) The use of mechanical restraint is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs.
- (d) The use of chemical restraint is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs.
- (e) The use of physical restraint is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs except in those situations in which the student is an immediate danger to himself or others and the student is not responsive to less intensive behavioral interventions including verbal directives or other de-escalation techniques.
  - 1. Notwithstanding the foregoing, physical restraint is prohibited in Georgia public schools and educational programs:
    - (i) as a form of discipline or punishment,
    - (ii) when the student cannot be safely restrained, and
    - (iii) when the use of the intervention would be contraindicated due to the student's psychiatric, medical, or physical conditions as described in the student's educational records.
- (f) All physical restraint must be immediately terminated when the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others or if the student is observed to be in severe distress.
- (g) Schools and programs that use physical restraint in accordance with paragraph (2)(e) of this rule must develop and implement written policies to govern the use of physical restraint. Parents must be provided information regarding the school or program's policies governing the use of physical restraint. The written policies must include the following provisions:

1. Staff and faculty training on the use of physical restraint and the school or programs policy and procedures,
  2. Written parental notification when physical restraint is used to restrain their student within a reasonable time not to exceed one school day from the use of restraint,
  3. Procedures for observing and monitoring the use of physical restraint.
  4. The use of physical restraint to be documented by staff or faculty participating in or supervising the restraint for each student in each instance in which the student is restrained.
  5. Procedures for the periodic review of the use of restraint and the documentation described in paragraph (2)(g)(4).
- (h) Schools and programs that use physical restraints in accordance with paragraph (2)(e) of this rule, must ensure that staff and faculty are trained in the use of physical restraint. This training shall be provided as a part of a program which addresses a full continuum of positive behavioral intervention strategies as well as prevention and de-escalation techniques. Schools and programs must maintain written or electronic documentation on training provided and the list of participants in each training. Records of such training must be made available to the Georgia Department of Education or any member of the public upon request.
- (i) Nothing in this rule shall be construed to interfere with a school district, school or program, or school or program employee's authority to utilize time-out as defined in paragraph (1)(g) of this rule or any other classroom management technique or approach, including a student's removal from the classroom, that is not specifically addressed in this rule.
- (j) Nothing in this rule shall be construed to prohibit a school district, school, or program employee from taking appropriate action to diffuse a student fight or altercation.
- (k) Nothing in this rule shall be construed to eliminate or restrict the ability of an employee of a school district, school or program to use his or her discretion in the use of physical restraint to protect students or others from imminent harm or bodily injury. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to impose ministerial duties on individual employees of a school district, school or program when acting to protect students or others from imminent harm or bodily injury.
- (l) In some instances in which a student is an immediate danger to himself or herself or others, the school or program must determine when it becomes necessary to seek assistance from law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel. Nothing in these rules shall be construed to interfere with the duties of law enforcement or emergency medical personnel.
1. Parents must be immediately informed when students are removed from the school or program setting by emergency medical or law enforcement personnel.

Authority: O.C.G.A. §20-2-240.

Additional guidance for State BOE Rule 160-5-1-.35 Seclusion and Restraint for All Students is available in the [Guidance for State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1.35](#)

## **DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING**

### **Full Time Equivalent Counts**

Each student served in a Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) program must have been through due process procedures and have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) documenting placement in the program. The student data reporting requirements for students placed in a GNETS program are the same as the requirements for all other students. GNETS students must be enrolled in an LEA (Local Education Agency) and have an assigned GTID (Georgia Test Identifier). All Student Record Files including enrollment and discipline must be reported for every GNETS student in the student's LEA of residence. LEAs must coordinate with their GNETS program to develop a data exchange system to provide the information required for input in the local student information system. To facilitate the transfer of data, IEPs for GNETS students should be written in the IEP platform of their LEA of residence.

### **Overview of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) 1 and 3**

Each annual FTE cycle has a count date for the reporting of data by the school districts. Data collected on the count day during cycles 1 and 3 can be thought of as a "picture" or "point in time snapshot" of the scheduled instructional services provided for the students on that specific date. The FTE report must indicate the student's specific assigned program for each one-sixth segment of the school day on the designated reporting date. FTE provides an enrollment count of students as well as an indication of program participation based on the instructional services received during the six segments.

### **Frequently Asked Questions Related to FTE 1 and 3**

#### *How is FTE for a special entity reported?*

Georgia Board Rule 160-5-1-.03 Identification and Reporting of Schools (d) states that FTE for special entities shall be reported at the student's home school or the school where the student would be assigned if the student being served is a nonresident student of the school district where the special entity is located.

#### *Are GNETS programs considered "schools"?*

GNETS programs do not meet the definition of a "school" as defined in Georgia Board Rule 160-5-1-.03 Identification and Reporting of Schools (with the exception of the DeKalb/Rockdale GNETS program schools Eagle Woods and Shadow Rock, which are considered schools within the DeKalb County School District). GNETS programs are defined as special entities. Georgia Board Rule 160-5-1-.03 Identification and Reporting of Schools (2.7.(b)) defines a special entity as an educational facility other than a school that houses students for all or part of the instructional day and does not report students for the purpose of earning FTE-based QBE funds.

#### *Are GNETS students reported in FTE 1 and 3?*

Students must be reported by the LEA of residence (home school) in the October (FTE 1) and March (FTE 3) counts.

#### *What is the district of residence for students who attend a GNETS program located in another district?*

For students who attend a GNETS program located in another district, their district of residence would be the district they would attend if they were not enrolled in a GNETS program. This also applies to students who attend non-GNETS classes (general education or special education) in the district where the GNETS program is located when it is not their district of residence.

*Is it okay to report GNETS students for FTE 1 in the district where the GNETS program is located and in FTE 3 in their resident district?*

**NO.** FTE shall be reported at the student's home school or the school where the student would be assigned if the student were not being served in a GNETS program. In addition, entering and withdrawing students impacts their Full Academic Year (FAY) status and removes them from the accountability process for the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO).

*What FTE program code is used to report segments of GNETS services?*

Students served for segments in GNETS should be coded with a program code of '4' in the appropriate segments on the day of the count for FTE 1 and 3, regardless of the funding source for the GNETS teacher.

*What FTE program code is used to report segments of services that are not provided by GNETS?*

Students receiving segments of services from a non-GNETS program should be reported with the program codes specific to the other program for the segments served by that program. Example: If the student receives 3 segments of emotional and behavioral disorder instruction (program code "T") on the FTE count day, and attended a GNETS class for the other 3 segments, only the 3 segments in the GNETS class would be coded as program code "4." The other 3 segments would be coded as "T."

*Where are segments reported when a GNETS student is served in a GNETS program located in another district or a GNETS student is served in non-GNETS classes in a district where the GNETS program is located when it is not the district of residence for the students?*

All segments for students who are placed by the district of residence by **IEP determination** must be reported for FTE by the resident district.

*How are GNETS students on tracking and monitoring reported?*

Unless the GNETS service meets the definition of "consultative" services, it is not reported in FTE 1 and 3. Consultative services are defined as the student receiving regularly scheduled direct instruction from the program for at least one segment per month AND direct instruction for the majority of a segment on the day of the FTE count.

*Is there an FTE funding weight program code assigned to GNETS?*

There is not an FTE weight assigned to the GNETS program. GNETS programs are funded through a separate grant appropriated from the Georgia General Assembly.

## Special Education Environments

### Frequently Asked Questions Related to the Federal Reporting

*Are Special Education Environments reported for GNETS students?*

Yes. Special education environments indicate the type of educational setting in which the student receives special education services. Special education environment codes and definitions are different for students whose DATE OF BIRTH indicates an age of 6 or above as of September 1

and for students whose DATE OF BIRTH indicates an age of 5 or under as of September 1. For information on calculating time in an environment, see the *Guidelines for Reporting Special Education Environments* on the [Data Collection FTE webpage](#).

*What environment code is used to report GNETS students who are served in a “center-based” separate facility for greater than 50% of the day?*

A separate facility is defined as a standalone program that does not afford students the opportunity to access age-appropriate non-disabled peers during the school day. If the GNETS program is located in a separate facility and the student is served in this location for greater than 50% of the day, the student is reported with an

**Environment Code of 4** – Public Separate Facility for students age of 6 or above as of September 1 or

**Environment Code of F** – Public Separate Facility for students age of 5 and under as of September 1. (Unless the student also attends a general education early childhood program; these students are always reported with an Early Childhood Environment code.)

*What environment code is used to report GNETS students who are served in a GNETS program located in a facility that allows the student access to age-appropriate non-disabled peers?*

When GNETS students *age of 6 and above* attend classes in a building that allows access to age-appropriate non-disabled peers and a specific student is served in the generalized setting, the student would be reported with Environments 1-3 based on the percentage of time the student spends in a generalized setting. A generalized setting is defined as the *total number of hours in the school day*, including lunch, recess, and study periods, when a student has access to non-disabled peers.

**Environment 1** – In a generalized setting at least 80% of the school day

**Environment 2** – In a generalized setting at least 40% of the school day but no more than 79% of the school day

**Environment 3** – In a generalized setting less than 40% of the school day

When GNETS students *age of 5 and below* attend a facility that allows access to age-appropriate non-disabled peers and a specific student is served in the generalized setting, the student would be reported with Environments A-E based on the amount of time the student attends a regular early childhood program as a percentage of the total special education services received in the regular early childhood program.

**Environment A** – Children who attend a Regular Early Childhood Program at least 10 hours per week and receive the majority of their special education and related services in the Regular Early Childhood Program.

**Environment B** – Children who attend a Regular Early Childhood Program at least 10 hours per week and receive the majority of special education and related services in some other location.

**Environment C** – Children who attend a Regular Early Childhood Program less than 10 hours per week and receive the majority of their special education and related services in the Regular Early Childhood Program.

**Environment D** – Children who attend a Regular Early Childhood Program less than 10 hours per week and receive the majority of special education and related services in some other location

Students age 5 and under who receive all their special education services in a special education classroom and do not attend a regular early childhood program are reported in either Environment E or F.

**Environment E** – Students under age 5 on September 1 who receive *all* of their special education and related services in educational programs designed primarily for children with disabilities housed in regular school buildings or other community-based settings.

**Environment F** – Students under age 5 on September 1 who receive *all* of their special education and related services in educational programs designed primarily for children with disabilities in a Separate Public or Private Facility (no access to typically developing peers).

*How are students age 6 and above receiving services in a GNETS center-based program for less than 50% of the day and then attending general education classes reported?*

Students receiving GNETS services in a separate facility for a portion of the school day and also attending general education classes on a general education campus would be reported in Environment 1, 2, or 3 as defined above.

*How is the percentage of time in a generalized setting calculated?*

When determining the amount of time a student is in a generalized setting, you must divide the number of hours the student spends inside the general classroom (the time spent outside the general classroom receiving services unrelated to the student's disability is considered time inside the general classroom) by *the total number of hours in the school day (including lunch, recess and study periods)*. The result is multiplied by 100. An Environment Calculator is provided on the [FTE Data Collections webpage](#).

## **GNETS Program Level File**

Students served at any time during the current school year in a GNETS program should be reported with a Program Level File in Student Record. The GNETS student count used in funding GNETS programs will be obtained based on the students reported in this file.

### **Frequently Asked Questions Related to Student Record Data Collection – Program Level File**

*Who reports the GNETS students for all state level data collections?*

The resident district of the student reports, even if the student attends non-GNETS classes in a school in the district where the GNETS program is located.

*What is the GNETS program type?*

The program type data element identifies the type of program being reported for each record's activity. The program type code for GNETS is '02' and its Element ID is 'PGM007.'

*What are program codes for GNETS programs?*

Where program type = GNETS '02,' the program code must equal one of the following codes:

'8' = GNETS – Center Based

'9' = GNETS – School Based

GNETS – Center Based '8' is defined as a separate program that operates as a standalone and does not afford students the opportunity to access age-appropriate non-disabled peers during the school day.

GNETS – School Based '9' is defined as a program that allows student access to non-disabled peers during the school day.

*What school code is used for GNETS students?*

Two school codes are reported for GNETS students attending a GNETS program. The 'School Code' (Element ID PGM004) is used to report the home school the student would attend if not enrolled in a GNETS program and the 'Alternate School Code' (Element ID PGM011) is the school code assigned to the GNETS program the student attends.

*What system code is used for GNETS students?*

Two system codes are reported for GNETS students attending a GNETS program not located in their district of residence. The 'System Code' (Element ID PGM003) is used to report the district the student would attend if not enrolled in a GNETS program and the 'Alternate System Code' (Element ID PGM014) is the system code assigned to the district where the GNETS program is located.

*How is duration of enrollment in a GNETS program determined?*

The duration of services for a student enrolled in a GNETS program is calculated using the 'Beginning Date' (Element ID PGM009) and 'Ending Date' (Element ID PGM0010). For students with continuous enrollment, 'Beginning Date' would be the first day of school and 'Ending Date'

would be the last day of school. Multiple beginning and ending dates may be submitted if a student enters and exits the GNETS program multiple times during the school year.

*What should be reported if a student moves but does not change GNETS programs or moves and changes GNETS programs?*

If a student changes school districts but not GNETS programs, both districts should report a Program Level record for the student reflecting the appropriate 'Beginning Date' (Element ID PGM009) and 'Ending Date' (Element ID PGM0010). The 'System Code' (Element ID PGM003), used to report the district, and the 'School Code' (Element ID PGM004), used to report the home school the student would attend if not enrolled in a GNETS program, will be different in the Program Level records; but the 'Alternate School Code' (Element ID PGM011), the school code assigned to the GNETS program the student attends, would not change.

If a student changes school districts and GNETS programs, both districts should report a Program Level record for the student reflecting the appropriate 'Beginning Date' (Element ID PGM009) and 'Ending Date' (Element ID PGM0010). The 'System Code' (Element ID PGM003), used to report the district; the 'School Code' (Element ID PGM004), used to report the home school the student would attend if not enrolled in a GNETS program; and the 'Alternate School Code' (Element ID PGM011), the school code assigned to the GNETS program the student attends; will all change in the Program Level records.

*How is frequency of GNETS services determined?*

The 'Number of Daily GNETS Segments' (Element ID PGM015) identifies the highest number of daily segments (1-6) a student received in a GNETS program during the school year.

*Are students monitored or tracked by GNETS reported with Program File?*

No, unless they meet the definition for consultative services that states that the student receives regularly scheduled direct instruction from the program for at least one segment per month.

*Can students have multiple GNETS program records?*

Yes, multiple GNETS program records are required if the student has multiple GNETS placements during the school year. This applies to students who are placed in GNETS, removed from GNETS, and subsequently returned to GNETS.

*Are students served by GNETS in a summer program reported with Program File?*

No, only students served by GNETS during the school year should be reported with a program file. Students receiving Extended Year Services (ESY) beyond the normal school year in accordance with the student's IEP should be reported in Student Record Data Element ID: STU046 with a 'Y' – Special Education ESY received.

## **Other Student Record Data Collections (Non-GNETS Specific)**

LEAs are responsible for ensuring that data are entered in the Student Information System and Student record for all their students receiving GNETS services. This includes, but is not limited to, discipline events, attendance events, and course level events. GNETS directors and LEA

personnel should develop a process for ensuring the transmission of accurate data in a timely manner.

### **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Student Record Data Collection**

*Must discipline events for GNETS students be reported in the LEA Student Record?*

Yes, all discipline events for GNETS students must be reported to the LEA and subsequently included in the LEA's Discipline Level File. This includes, but is not limited to, all incidences of in-school and out-of-school suspensions, continuation of services for students suspended for 10 or more days, physical restraint, and incidences of serious bodily injury. Serious bodily injury is defined as a "bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ of faculty." (18 U.S.C. Section 1365(3)(h)).

*Must enrollment and attendance events for GNETS students be reported in the LEA Student Record?*

Yes, attendance and enrollment data for GNETS students must be reported in the Enrollment Level File by the LEA.

*Must course level events for GNETS students be reported in the LEA Student Record?*

Yes, all active fulltime students in grades 6-12 must have a Course Level File. Course information is submitted for any course that the student took for credit and completed. The course record is submitted regardless of whether or not the student passed the course.

*How are courses reported in student record if the teacher of record is not an employee of the district where the student resides?*

In the Course Level Record, the Course Teacher ID (D011) should be reported as '555555555' for "contract worker." All course information should be provided by the GNETS program and non-resident district to the resident district in a timely manner.

*What are the class size implications on the resident district's Class Size Report when reporting students served in a GNETS class located in another district or for GNETS students served in non-GNETS class located in another district?*

Each student must have an individual class schedule and appropriate courses must be developed. The Teacher ID (B008) should be reported as '555555555.' It is not necessary to include these students in established classes.

### **Other Special Education Data Collections**

Non-GNETS Specific LEA data submitted through the GaDOE Portal application must include students served by GNETS programs. This includes, but is not limited to, timeline data for eligibility re-determination, postsecondary outcomes, and preschool outcomes.

## **Frequently Asked Questions Related to Other Special Education Data Collections**

*How are GNETS students reported for AYP?*

Georgia Board Rule 160-5-1-.03 Identification and Reporting of Schools (d) states that AYP determinations for students served by special entities shall be included in the home school or home school district's AYP determinations. *State of Georgia Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook* states, "Students in programs and GNET psychoeducational centers will either have their test scores counted back to their home school or their home district for AYP purposes" (page 8).

## **Frequently Asked Questions Related to Certified/Classified Personnel Information**

*Is the funding source for a GNETS teacher reflected in his or her job code in CPI?*

Yes. The job code for a GNETS teacher funded by the GNETS grant is '153,' and the job code for a GNETS teacher funded by the local school district is '152.'

*Does reporting students served in a GNETS program located in another district or GNETS students served in non-GNETS classes in the district where the GNETS program is located, when it is not district of residence for the students, impact the resident district's CPI?*

No. Services provided to students by other school districts do not impact the resident district's CPI. The resident district would not report CPI data for staff at a GNETS program or in a school located in another school district.

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## PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

### GNETS Annual Accountability Report

In addition to the student program level file and other required data discussed earlier in this section, GNETS programs are required to submit an annual accountability report summarizing key data about their programs. These data are collected and aggregated to assist with program review and planning as part of the [Georgia Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process](#).

The following information is provided in the GNETS Accountability Report:

- Least Restrictive Environment
- Mental Health Services

### Least Restrictive Environment

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the State Rules for Special Education, students with disabilities must be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). This requirement is well aligned to a GNETS program's focus on serving students in their communities. The GNETS Accountability Report captures the number and percent of students whose IEPs indicate increased instructional time in a less restrictive setting (special education or general education).

#### Directions for Calculating LRE for GNETS Students

1. Count students whose instructional time in a less restrictive setting (general education or special education classes outside of GNETS classes) was either added or increased for at least one segment per day and the placement in the less restrictive setting was maintained for a minimum of 20 school days. If the IEP developed for the next school year indicates less restrictive setting, count that change to LRE for the school year in which the IEP was written. More LRE for the next school year would only be counted if another change occurred after the start of the next school year.
2. Count students who completely exit the GNETS program but continue to receive special education services in the LEA. If at the end of a school year, a student's IEP for the next school year returns the student to the LEA, this student should be counted for the year in which the IEP was written.

#### Frequently Asked Questions about LRE:

*When a student's classroom placement changes from a GNETS separate facility to a GNETS class located on an age-appropriate school campus (although the student is not attending any classes outside of GNETS classes) is this considered a less restrictive setting that should be counted?*

No. Students should only be counted as placed in a less restrictive setting if they meet the conditions of receiving instructional time in either general education or special education classes outside of GNETS classes for at least 20 school days.

*Should students whose IEP teams recommend a less restrictive setting for the following school year be counted in the current school year's GNETS Annual Accountability Report?*

Yes. If the IEP developed for the next school year indicates a less restrictive setting, count that change to LRE for the school year in which the IEP was written.

## Mental Health Services

Students served in GNETS programs frequently need mental health services to supplement the therapeutic services provided by GNETS staff and contractors. These mental health services can be provided by mental health providers in the school or outside of school. This portion of the accountability reports captures the number and percent of students receiving mental health services from a licensed mental health provider.

### Directions for Calculating Mental Health Services

1. "Mental Health Services Provided at School" includes students who receive mental health services from a licensed private or community mental health provider in the school setting. Leaving it blank means students do not receive services from private or community mental health in the school setting. *(This does not include any groups or counseling provided by school personnel.)*
2. "Mental Health Services Provided Outside of School" includes students receiving any mental health services from a licensed community or private mental health provider outside of school.

## Annual Accountability Report Example

GNETS Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Least Restrictive Environment

Students Increased Instruction in Less Restrictive Settings		
Age	#	%
Preschool		
Elementary		
Middle		
High School		
Total		

Students Returned to Special Education School System	
Age	#
Preschool	
Elementary	
Middle	
High School	
Total	

**Mental Health  
Services**

Students Receiving Mental Health Services At School		
Age	#	%
Preschool		
Elementary		
Middle		
High School		
Total		

Students Receiving Mental Health Services At School	
Age	#
Preschool	
Elementary	
Middle	
High School	
Total	

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## STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS

### Participation in State Assessment Programs

#### State-Mandated Assessments

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that all students with disabilities, including students placed in GNETS programs, be included in state and local assessment programs. The IDEA also mandates that the IEP include a statement of participation and accommodations needed for the administration of state and local assessments. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) process determines the educational needs of a student with disabilities and the service or services required to meet the identified needs.

Decisions regarding the participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessment must be made, on a case-by-case basis, by each student's IEP team. The IEP team should (a) consider the purpose of the assessment; (b) consider the feasibility of the student's participation; (c) determine what accommodation(s), if any, the student will need and document this in the student's IEP; and (d) document in the IEP the decision for test participation in the IEP. If the student's IEP team recommends that s/he not participate in the regular statewide assessment, then the IEP must (a) document the reason the student will not participate, and (b) identify participation in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) or CRCT-M. The IEP team must ensure the student meets the eligibility requirements to participate in the GAA or CRCT-M.

Accommodation(s) considered by IEP teams must be consistent with those used during classroom instruction and assessment. IEP teams must consider only state-approved accommodations for state-mandated tests. If an accommodation is recommended that is not included in Table 4 of the assessment manual, approval **MUST** be received from the Assessment Research, Development and Administration Division of the GaDOE prior to the inclusion of the accommodation in the student's IEP and its use. IEP teams may not include accommodations in IEPs that have not been approved by the state. The determination of accommodations must be considered annually.

#### The Georgia Alternate Assessment

Most students with disabilities can and should participate in the regular assessment program with standard accommodations, if needed. Georgia State Board of Education rules require that all students receive instruction based on the mandated content standards. If the student's instruction is based on the state standards, but the student is working towards alternate achievement standards, the student may participate in the GAA.

When the student cannot meaningfully access the general statewide assessments, even with maximum accommodations, and meets the participation guidelines to participate in the GAA, then the student may participate in the GAA. All decisions regarding participation in the assessment program must be documented in the student's IEP. This includes: 1) which assessments the student will take; 2) what accommodations are needed for each assessment, if any; and 3) if the student is not participating in regular assessment, why the student is not and how the student will participate in the GAA. All decisions regarding participation in the assessment program must be kept on file

in the student's permanent record. Guidelines for participation in the Georgia Alternate Assessment are included in the [Testing and Assessment](#) the IEP team must ensure the student meets the eligibility requirements to participate in the GAA.

### **Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests – Modified (CRCT – M)**

The CRCT-M is a grade-level alternate assessment in reading, English/language arts, and mathematics - for eligible students who receive special education services and meet specific eligibility criteria. The program has been designed to meet federal requirements under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Additional information regarding the CRCT-M is available on the [CRCT-M](#) page of the GaDOE website.

### **Obtaining Scores from the LEA**

Each GNETS program should develop a process with each LEA so that GNETS Programs and teachers get score reports in a timely manner each year to facilitate the GNETS continuous improvement monitoring process.

### **GNETS Students' Evaluation and Planning**

In addition to State mandated testing, all GNETS students will be rated using either the Developmental Teaching Objectives Rating Forms – Revised, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (DTORF-R) or the Assessment of Basic Language & Literacy Skills (ABLLS). These instruments provide information on individual student's skills and deficit areas and inform program planning for individual students.

### **Graduation Requirements**

GNETS program staff must work closely with the LEA to follow all district policies and procedures required for the CCRPI, including all graduation planning for all GNETS students. GNETS students must have access to all of the tools, guidance and activities in planning for graduation. See the following links for more complete information.

[\*\*Graduation Rule 160-4-2-.48 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS\*\*](#)  
[\*\*Career Awareness & Exploration Guidance\*\*](#)  
[\*\*Career, Technical and Agricultural Education\*\*](#)

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# GNETS CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND MONITORING PROCESS

## Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), Division for Special Education Services and Supports is mandated by law to monitor compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), applicable federal regulations, and Rules of the State Board of Education. This is accomplished through Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (GCIMP). Since 2002, stakeholders have met to provide guidance and input to the GaDOE as Georgia moved from a model of procedural monitoring to one of continuous improvement with a focus on student results. Using the concepts of continuous improvement and focused monitoring adopted by the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Georgia has designed the GCIMP to promote continuous, equitable educational improvement for students with disabilities, while ensuring continued procedural compliance.

For complete and detailed information on the Georgia Continuous Monitoring Process, please refer to the [GCIMP Manual](#) available on the GaDOE web site.

### Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Plan for GNETS Programs

Each year, GNETS programs must complete a GCIMP plan and submit it to the GaDOE following the specified timelines. This plan is used to establish and monitor the improvement activities that are being implemented by the GNETS program.

<h3>Developing Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Plan (GCIMP)</h3>
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The following is a recommended step-by-step process for developing the GCIMP Plan.

#### **Step 1: Convene a Stakeholder Meeting**

#### **Step 2: Examine GNETS Program Annual Summary Report**

At this step, the Program Director should provide an orientation session for the Stakeholder Committee that serves as a preparatory session for the plan development process. Specifically, the committee should review all data in the annual report and other relevant program data.

#### **Step 3: Analyze Data**

At step 3, the Stakeholder Committee will engage in the analysis of the data contained in the annual performance summary report and other sources identified as relevant. The team should examine the data for patterns that could raise questions about current practice within the various facets of the GNETS Program.

Analyze program and student data to determine areas needing improvement:

- Use data to identify trends in subjects, domains, and subgroups.
- Use data to determine the areas needing improvement and determine priorities.

Review organizational practices:

- Allocation of certified and support staff
- Teacher quality initiatives
- Safe and positive environment
- Parent and community involvement
- Allocation of time to support student and staff learning (scheduling, teacher planning, transportation schedules, etc.)
- Collaborative planning time
- Allocation of space and facility management
- Accessibility of resources (i.e., sufficient school allocations to meet assessed student needs)
- Culture of learning
- Access to technology (hardware, instructional software, Internet for instruction)
- Attendance and discipline policies and procedures
- Curriculum, instruction, assessment, and grading policies
- Communication to all stakeholders

Determine current organizational and instructional practices that had a positive impact on student achievement. In addition, identify those practices that were not effective. Through this analysis process, determine those practices, programs, and initiatives that have failed to address the targeted areas in the Annual Report.

Review instructional practices

- Alignment of curriculum with Georgia Standards
- Instructional programs
- Interventions (after/before school programs, tutoring sessions, scaffolding classes, supplemental instruction)
- Professional learning
- Collaborative planning
- Classroom management
- Differentiated instruction
- Goals for student learning
- Assessments (diagnostic, formative, and summative)
- Curriculum mapping
- Lesson sequencing
- Allocation of instructional resources

In the data analysis step, the Stakeholder Committee should take a careful look at identifying the underlying causes of the problems. The team should involve as many of the stakeholders as possible in the analysis.

### **Seven Key Elements**

1. **Policies and Procedures** are aligned to improve student achievement.

- What are the barriers to improving student achievement?
- Identify any policies or practices at the district that might be the cause of the barriers.

2. **Leadership** assignments are considered and professional development for both administrators and teachers is provided.
  - To what extent is the program leadership knowledgeable about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and students with disabilities?
  - What role does the director play in instruction?
  - What leadership development is needed and for whom?
3. **Teacher Qualifications** are analyzed and action steps are taken to assure that all staff are effective and qualified to teach specific content areas.
  - Have all teachers had training to teach the specific subject area?
  - If not, what steps should be taken to ensure that all staff members have the skills needed to teach the subject area effectively?
  - Do the results of student assessment reflect quality instruction?
  - What steps should be taken to improve instructional quality and ensure that all staff members are effective?
4. **LEA Support** is significant and demonstrated for planning and implementation.
  - To what extent have the LEAs been part of this planning process?
  - What are the provisions for LEA support during implementation of the GCIMP Plan?
5. **Allocation of Resources** ensures that time, space, money, and personnel are utilized effectively and are focused on improving student achievement.
6. **Need for Change** establishes an understanding among stakeholders of the sense of urgency.
  - What steps need to be taken to ensure full support for the change process by parents, students, teachers, and community members?
7. **Identification of interventions and actions** in existing program improvement plans and in current initiatives.
  - Prioritize the identified needs and determine initiatives and interventions beginning with those that have the most potential for improving student achievement and that are within the program's control.
  - Examine the prioritized interventions and determine whether the interventions are sufficient to mitigate academic deficiencies.
  - From the prioritized list, identify needed interventions/strategies for targeted areas.

#### **Step 4: Set Goals for the Improvement Activities**

The program should develop interim measurable objectives with strategies related to improving the performance of students with disabilities. Regular formative assessment must be included with the improvement activities to enable adjustments to activities as needed.

#### **Step 5: Plan Professional Learning (PL) Support**

Identify professional learning necessary to support the implementation of interventions and strategies. Professional learning support should be aligned with each action, strategy, or intervention.

Funding sources, timelines for activities, support personnel, and costs must be clearly identified in the Plan. The professional learning should include follow up coaching support and technical assistance to ensure effectiveness.

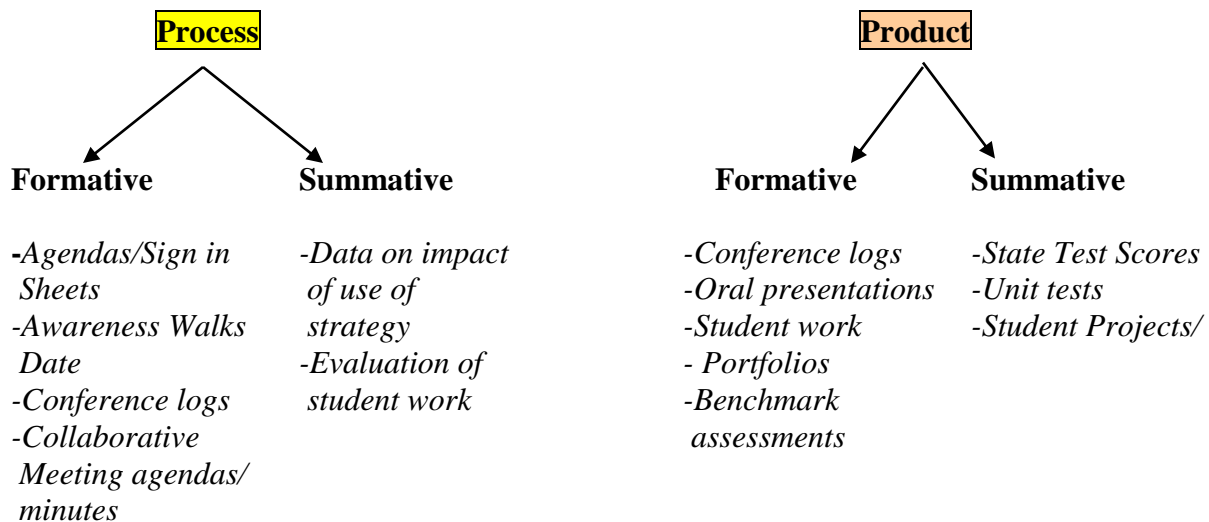
#### **Step 6: Designate Responsibilities**

Designate the person(s) or position(s) responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategies/interventions planned to meet the improvement goals for the district.

#### **Step 7: Plan Evaluation and Monitoring**

The plans for evaluating and monitoring improvement efforts are a critical component of the GCIMP Plan. Plans must include elements of both formative assessment and summative evaluation for the intervention process and for the results of the interventions.

**Formative assessment** includes periodic measures that are utilized during the actual implementation of the interventions or strategies. The **summative evaluation** comes at the end of the implementation period. This is true for the evaluation of both the **process and product**.



#### **Implementing and monitoring progress**

- Establish dates and times for team meetings to ensure all staff understand their roles in implementing the GCIMP Plan.
- The Implementation Team should utilize logs to document ongoing monitoring of progress on interventions.
- The Plan should designate persons responsible for monitoring and should list the tools that will be used to evaluate the plan.

#### **Step 8: Finalize the GCIMP Plan**

In this step, all details of the plan are finalized and documented using the GNETS GCIMP Plan template. It is imperative that commitment to the plan is established among all stakeholders. Include the list of all stakeholders' names in the GCIMP template.

**Step 9: Submit the GCIMP Plan no later than September 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Step 10: Implement and Monitor the GCIMP Plan**

The program must follow the timelines for the implementation and monitoring of the strategies set forth in the GCIMP Plan. Systematic monitoring will better ensure that the improvement process will be implemented as intended.

At the end of each fiscal year, provide a summary of the activities/strategies implemented and performance or progress data to update the baseline data.

**GNETS Monitoring**

Selected GNETS programs participate in monitoring each year; and GNETS programs are selected for monitoring based on a review of data that suggests the greatest opportunity for improvement. The on-site monitoring team visits a program to investigate the factors impacting academic and behavioral performance and compliance indicators.

Investigative protocols that address instruction and other compliance issues are used to gather and verify information and to identify barriers to progress during the on-site visit. Documentation review, classroom observations, student record reviews, and interviews with parents, students, program staff, and special education directors from referring districts may be used to gather information. Technical assistance from the Division for Special Education Services and Support (DSESS) is provided, and progress is regularly monitored.

More information regarding Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is available on the [GCIMP page](#) of the GaDOE website.

## **POSTSCRIPT**

This manual is subject to revision based upon input and feedback from stakeholders involved in the provision of services to students in GNETS programs. Input and feedback is encouraged and will be considered for future editions of this manual. Please direct your comments to the Georgia Department of Education using the contact information below.

Division for Special Education Services and Supports  
1870 Twin Towers East  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
Phone: 404-656-6319

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## APPENDIX A: PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION DIRECTIONS & SAMPLE FORMS

### Application for Funding and Description of Services Instructions

#### General

1. Blank application forms will be provided electronically via email each year.
2. Add the program name to the footer on each page. The program name must be on **EACH PAGE** of the proposal.
3. FY \_\_\_\_ Grant Applications are due June 15<sup>th</sup> each year. They should be submitted as an attachment to the budget via the GaDOE portal AND sent via email to the Division for Special Education Services and Supports, Georgia Department of Education. Send both the *draft* FY\_\_ Grant Application and draft budgets via email for review and preliminary feedback before entering in the portal for official GaDOE approval.

#### Abstract

1. The first section of the abstract includes the general information for GNETS program and fiscal agent.
2. The second section requires the total number of students served from each district for each of the previous two years and an explanation for variances greater than 10%.

#### Program Projections

1. Report the Program Projections by location and address. List school hours for each location. In Column 2, list the home districts of students served at each site.
2. Indicate the type of facility of each site and the number of classes of each level (Pre-K, Elementary, Middle, and High School) at each site.
3. The next two columns are for the TOTAL number of teachers and paraprofessionals located at each site. Do not include support staff that may support numerous sites (e.g., behavior specialist, social worker, etc.) as they will be counted on the Staffing Pattern form.
4. The Program Projections form also includes a column to indicate whether the location of the classes is on an age-appropriate, regular school campus. If it is, describe the collaboration and inclusion taking place (e.g., inclusion in regular classes, recess, cafeteria, professional learning communities, etc.). If classes are not located on an age-appropriate, regular school campus, provide the rationale and describe how students have access to general education peers and/or classes. *See example below.*

#### FY \_\_\_\_ Program Projections

Location Name and Address	Districts Served at this Location	Facility Type	Classes #	#Teach	#Paras	If this location is not on an age-appropriate regular school campus, include a rationale. If yes, describe collaboration and inclusion taking place.
Sunnyside School 123 ABC Street City, GA  School Hours: 8:00-3:30	X District XX District XXY District	Public School __Elementary School __Middle School __High School __Alternative School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Center __Other:	__PK <u>3</u> ES <u>2</u> MS <u>3</u> HS	8	11	This is our main center that contains classes we were unable to locate in a regular school. Eight of 24 high school students take some classes at their home schools in XX district and spend partial days at the center. Three elementary students from XX district are bused back to their home schools for the second part of the day to participate in general education classes. The other two districts do not provide transportation for partial days.
JFK Middle School  School Hours: 8:15-3:45	Y District	Public School __Elementary School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Middle School __High School __Alternative School __Center __Other:	__PK __ES <u>1</u> MS __HS	1	2	This is a regular campus and all students have the opportunity to attend classes in the general education and special education settings. Current projections indicate that 4 students participate in the general education setting for at least 2 classes per day. The GNETS teacher attends grade level and special education meetings at the school and collaborates on lesson plans and support for GNETS students in their classes. A paraprofessional supports students in general ed classes.
Friendly Elementary  School Hours: 8:30-3:30	X District	Public School <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elementary School __Middle School __High School __Alternative School __Center __Other:	__PK <u>2</u> ES __MS __HS	2	2	These two classes are 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade and they're located in an elementary school that has only 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> grades so no inclusion is possible. This is the only location offered by the local school district and we have made repeated requests for a change in schools.

### Staffing Pattern

1. The Staffing Pattern form lists all positions by funding source (state grant, federal funds, or LEA). Indicate a total of all positions, not people. For example, if there are two social workers, one working full time and one working half time, this would be listed as 1.5 on the Staffing Pattern.
2. Identify anyone listed as a teacher but not working in a classroom full time and describe this staff member's roles and responsibilities.

3. Additionally, on the Staffing Pattern list any contracted positions such as psychiatrists, psychologists, etc., with the name of the person and the nature of the work (e.g., Dr. Smith, Psychiatrist contracted to consult/evaluate new students).
4. Attach a job description for any newly established positions.

**Therapeutic Interventions**

List the therapeutic interventions that are provided consistently throughout your program. Please specify if some interventions are used only at certain levels (elementary, middle, or high). Include the name of the intervention and how fidelity of implementation is monitored.

**Mental Health Collaboration**

In this section, describe your collaboration with public or private mental health providers. Describe the mental health services provided both on-site and off-site.

**Positive Behavioral Interventions**

Georgia State Rule 160-4-7-.15 states that, “GNETS programs shall utilize evidence-based positive behavioral interventions, supports, and other strategies designed to increase children’s resilience and social emotional competence.” Provide a description and examples of the interventions and supports provided in your program.

**Access to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS)**

Describe how you ensure that all students receive instruction in grade level CCGPS. List the professional learning planned for your staff to support instruction in the CCGPS.

**Additional Fiscal Support Received or Anticipated from Participating LEAs**

List all additional funding and/or resources received or anticipated from participating LEAs in your program.

**Personnel List**

Complete the Personnel List for all personnel. Any updates/changes to this list must be submitted by October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

**INCLUDE WITH FY\_\_ GRANT APPLICATION AND SUBMIT BY JUNE 15<sup>th</sup>**

<p><b>1. GNETS Assurances</b></p> <p>A. Fiscal agent assurance statement with signatures of the fiscal agent (RESA director or superintendent) and GNETS director.</p> <p>B. GNETS assurance page with signatures of each superintendent and special education director.</p>
<p><b>2. Written procedures governing the purchasing of goods and services when using state and federal grant GNETS grant funds</b> (if revised from previous year)</p>
<p><b>3. Written procedures for reporting suspected child abuse or mistreatment</b> (if revised from previous year)</p>
<p><b>4. Indirect Cost Letter</b> (if charged)</p> <p>Letter must contain the amount of indirect cost charged and the purpose of the charge.</p>
<p><b>5. Safe School Plan</b> (if changed or revised from previous year)</p>
<p><b>6. School Calendar</b></p> <p>Attach the GNETS school calendar for the next school year. If your program is following one calendar from a district you serve, you may attach that and indicate it as your calendar. If you are not following one specific school calendar, attach your own and indicate any variances of student and/or staff attendance based on different calendars. If different sites follow different district calendars, include those and name the sites.</p>

## Submissions Via the Consolidated Application

The following documents will be submitted by the fiscal agent through the Consolidated Application. Budgets must be submitted to fiscal agent designee prior to June 15<sup>th</sup> each year. The other requirements will be met when the fiscal agent signs off and submits the Consolidated Application electronically.

<b>1. FY__ State and Federal Budgets</b>
(Use the budget forms found on the <a href="#">Special Education page</a> on the <a href="#">GaDOE website</a> . Submit completed budget forms to fiscal agent who will submit through the Consolidated Application process <b>by June 15<sup>th</sup> each year.</b> )
<b>2. Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension, Ethics, and other Matters</b>
<b>3. Drug-Free Workplace Requirements</b>
<b>4. General Education and Special Education Assurances</b>

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## APPENDIX B: SAMPLE ASSURANCE FORMS

### Sample Assurance Form – RESA as Fiscal Agent

#### Assurances to the Georgia Department of Education FY\_\_ GNETS Program

Comes now, the \_\_\_\_\_ Regional Educational Services Agency (hereinafter “RESA”), designated fiscal agent by its member Local Education Agencies (hereinafter “LEAs”) for the \_\_\_\_\_ Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support Program (hereinafter “GNETS Program”), formerly known as the Georgia Psychoeducational Program. We agree to operate the program in accordance with Georgia Department of Education Rules 160-4-7-.15 and 160-5-1-.35, O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-152, 20-2-240, 20-2-270, 20-2-270.1, 20-2-272, 20-2-274, and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and to abide by the following specific assurances regarding the operation of the GNETS program:

1. As to the students placed by the LEA at the GNETS Program, the GNETS Program will coordinate with the participating LEAs to comply with the Georgia Special Education and General Education Assurances, copies of which are attached to this assurances form.
2. As to the students placed by the LEA at the GNETS Program, the GNETS Program will coordinate with the participating LEAs to maintain compliance with all Georgia Rules for Special Education including attendance at Individualized Education Program meetings and educating students in the Least Restrictive Environment.
3. As to the students placed by the LEA at the GNETS Program, the GNETS Program will coordinate with the participating LEAs to ensure the provision of textbooks, Georgia Performance Standards curriculum materials and resources, technology and its support, and state and local testing materials. Anything provided through the use of Quality Basic Education funds will be the responsibility of the LEAs.
4. The GNETS Program will ensure that restraint is used pursuant to the rules and guidelines of the Georgia Department of Education (hereinafter “GaDOE”) that govern the use of restraint. Seclusion rooms will not be used in GNETS Programs. By September 1, the GNETS Program will submit to the GaDOE the most current version of its written procedures for the use of restraint.
5. The GNETS Program will coordinate with the participating LEAs to ensure that facilities will be provided and maintained. Each facility shall be covered by a Safe School Plan (hereinafter “SSP”). GNETS Programs located within another public school facility will be covered by that facility’s SSP. GNETS Programs located in facilities not housing another public school will submit the most current version of the SSP to the GaDOE by September 1. GaDOE staff will assist in the development of this plan if needed.
6. The RESA will ensure that all employees of the GNETS program or any person with unsupervised access to students are fingerprinted as required by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211(e).
7. The GNETS Program will ensure that funds will be budgeted and utilized according to state and federal accounting procedures. Funds will not be spent for any purpose not included in the approved FY\_\_ GNETS budget.
8. The GNETS Program budget amendments will be submitted when expenditures in a function category exceed 125% of the approved amount.
9. Prior to expending state or federal GNETS grant funds to purchase any equipment that (1) has a useful life of two or more years and (2) would be purchased with \$1,000 or more of state grant funds or \$5,000 or more in federal grant funds, the GNETS Program shall submit a purchase request to GaDOE for approval.

10. The GNETS Program may request to carry-over up to 100% of FY\_\_ Federal funds. Such request shall be approved by the GaDOE.
11. By September 1, the RESA shall submit to the GaDOE a copy of its written procedures governing the purchasing of goods and services when using state and federal GNETS grant funds. Such procedures shall include a competitive pricing requirement for any equipment costing \$1000 or more if the purchase is from state funds or \$5000 or more if the purchase is from federal funds, if the equipment has a useful life of two years or more.
12. The Executive Director of the RESA will be subject to all of the requirements and limitations placed upon the Board of Control members as stated in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-505.
13. The GNETS Program shall not knowingly employ, contract with, or make payment to an employee of the GaDOE or a family member of an employee of the GaDOE. For purposes of this provision, "family member of an employee" shall mean a GaDOE employee's father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, half sister, spouse of an in-law, or a member of the employee's household. This provision shall not be applicable to employees hired before September 1, 2008. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the GNETS Program may employ, contract, or make payment to an employee or family member of an employee of the GaDOE upon receipt of prior written approval from the GaDOE's Human Resources office and the State Superintendent of Schools or his designee. No employee assigned to the GNETS Program shall supervise or be supervised by his or her family member.
14. The RESA shall not pay out of state or federal GNETS grant funds another GNETS program director or full-time staff member for consulting services, including but not limited to professional learning and technical assistance services, unless the GaDOE previously approved in writing the employee's request to perform such consulting services.
15. By September 1, the RESA shall submit to the GaDOE a copy of its written procedures governing the employment of family members of RESA employees. This procedure shall include a provision allowing for its waiver by vote of the Board of Control. To the extent this procedure is created subsequent to these assurances, it may provide for a grandfather clause applicable to all existing employees.
16. The GaDOE reserves the right to withhold GNETS funding if the RESA fails to submit in a timely manner to the GaDOE the written procedures it is required to develop in Paragraphs 4, 5, 11, and 15. The GaDOE reserves the right to withhold GNETS funding if the RESA fails to provide to the GaDOE any subsequent amendments made to the aforementioned written procedures.
17. All employees assigned to the GNETS program or those paid by grant funds will comply with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's Code of Ethics for Educators.

(Signatures to follow)

Signature/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Chair, RESA Board of Control

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of RESA Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of GNETS Director FY\_\_ GNETS RESA Assurances

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Sample Assurance Form – LEA as Fiscal Agent

### Assurances to the Georgia Department of Education FY\_\_ GNETS Program

Comes now, \_\_\_\_\_, Superintendent of School District, as the designated fiscal agent for the Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support Program (hereinafter “GNETS Program”), formerly Georgia Psychoeducational Program. I agree to operate the program in accordance with Georgia Department of Education Rules 160-4-7-.15 and 160-5-1-.35, O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-152, 20-2-240, 20-2-270, 20-2-270.1, 20-2-272, 20-2-274, and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and to abide by the following specific assurances regarding the operation of the GNETS program:

1. As to the students placed by the participating local education agencies (hereinafter “LEAs”) at the GNETS Program, the GNETS Program will coordinate with the participating LEAs to comply with the Georgia Special Education and General Education Assurances, copies of which are attached to this assurances form.
2. As to the students placed by the participating LEAs at the GNETS Program, the GNETS Program will coordinate with the participating LEAs to maintain compliance with all Georgia Rules for Special Education, including attendance at Individualized Education Program meetings and educating students in the Least Restrictive Environment.
3. As to the students placed by the participating LEAs at the GNETS Program, the GNETS Program will coordinate with the participating LEAs to ensure the provision of textbooks, Georgia Performance Standards curriculum materials and resources, technology and its support, and state and local testing materials. Anything provided through the use of Quality Basic Education funds will be responsibility of the LEAs.
4. The GNETS Program will ensure that restraint is used pursuant to the rules and guidelines of the Georgia Department of Education (hereinafter “GaDOE”) that govern the use of restraint. Seclusion rooms will not be used in GNETS Programs. By September 1, the GNETS Program will submit to the GaDOE the most current version of its written procedures for the use of restraint.
5. The GNETS Program will coordinate with the participating LEAs to ensure that facilities will be provided and maintained. Each facility shall be covered by a Safe School Plan (hereinafter “SSP”). GNETS Programs located within another public school facility will be covered by that facility’s SSP. GNETS Programs located in facilities not housing another public school will submit the most current version of the SSP to the GaDOE by September 1. GaDOE staff will assist in the development of this plan if needed.
6. The LEA will ensure that all employees of the GNETS Program or any person with unsupervised access to students are fingerprinted as required by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211(e).
7. The GNETS Program will ensure that funds will be budgeted and utilized according to state and federal accounting procedures. Funds will not be spent for any purpose not included in the approved FY\_\_ GNETS budget. The GNETS Program budget amendments will be submitted when expenditures in a function category exceed 125% of the approved amount.
8. Prior to expending state or federal GNETS grant funds to purchase any equipment that (1) has a useful life of two or more years and (2) would be purchased with \$1,000 or more of state grant funds or \$5,000 or more in federal grant funds, the GNETS Program shall submit a purchase request to GaDOE for approval.
9. The GNETS Program may request to carry-over up to 100% of Federal funds. Such request shall be approved by the GaDOE.
10. By September 1, the LEA shall submit to the GaDOE a copy of its written procedures governing the purchasing of goods and services when using state and federal GNETS grant funds. Such procedures shall include a

competitive pricing requirement for any equipment costing \$1000 or more if the purchase is from state funds or \$5000 or more if the purchase is from federal funds, if the equipment has a useful life of two years or more.

11. The GNETS Program shall not knowingly employ, contract with, or make payment to an employee of the GaDOE or a family member of an employee of the GaDOE. For purposes of this provision, “family member of an employee” shall mean a GaDOE employee’s father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half- brother, half- sister, spouse of an in-law, or a member of the employee’s household. This provision shall not be applicable to employees hired before September 1, 2008. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the GNETS Program may employ, contract, or make payment to an employee or family member of an employee of the GaDOE upon receipt of prior written approval from the GaDOE’s Human Resources office and the State Superintendent of Schools or his designee. No employee assigned to the GNETS Program shall supervise or be supervised by his or her family member.
12. The LEA shall not pay out of state or federal GNETS grant funds another GNETS program director or full-time staff member for consulting services, including, but not limited to, professional learning and technical assistance services, unless the GaDOE previously approved in writing the employee’s request to perform such consulting services.
13. By September 1, the LEA shall submit to the GaDOE a copy of its written procedures governing the employment of family members of LEA employees. This procedure shall include a provision allowing for its waiver by vote of the Board of Education. To the extent this procedure is created subsequent to these assurances, it may provide for a grandfather clause applicable to all existing employees.
14. The GaDOE reserves the right to withhold GNETS funding if the LEA fails to submit in a timely manner to the GaDOE the written procedures it is required to develop in Paragraphs 4, 5, 10, and 13. The GaDOE reserves the right to withhold GNETS funding if the LEA fails to provide to the GaDOE any subsequent amendments made to the aforementioned written procedures.
15. All employees assigned to the GNETS program or those paid by grant funds will comply with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission’s Code of Ethics for Educators.

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Signature of Superintendent

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Signature Date

## Sample Assurance Form – Participating School Districts

### FY \_\_ GNETS Program Assurances for Participating School Districts

In accordance with State Board of Education Rule 160-4-7-.15, *Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS)*, \_\_\_\_\_ School District (LEA) has designated \_\_\_\_\_ as the fiscal agent for the GNETS program that serves students from the LEA. Pursuant to this designation, I understand that funds granted to the LEA for this program will be sent to the designated fiscal agent. I further understand and agree that:

1. The LEA is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for all students it enrolls in the GNETS program.
2. The LEA will coordinate with the GNETS director to ensure that all student data are accurately entered into the Student Record and Student Information Systems and reported in accordance State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.07, *Student Data Collection*.
3. The LEA will coordinate with the GNETS director to ensure the necessary provision of textbooks, Georgia Performance Standards curriculum materials and resources, technology and its support, and state and local testing materials. Any materials or services provided through the use of QBE funds will be responsibility of the LEA.
4. The LEA will coordinate with the GNETS director and the GNETS' fiscal agent to ensure that appropriate facilities will be provided and maintained in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.
5. The LEA will coordinate with the GNETS director to ensure that transportation is provided for students participating in the GNETS program. The LEA, however, has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that a student receives necessary transportation.
6. The LEA will coordinate with the GNETS director to ensure that related services including, but not limited to, speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy are provided to students when these services are determined to be educationally necessary by the students' IEP teams. The LEA, however, has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that a student receives all services necessary under the law and the student's IEP.

Name of Participating School District \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participating School District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

cc: Participating School District Special Education Coordinator  
RESA Director  
GNETS Director

## General Assurances

As a condition of receiving the state and federal funds for which application is made in this Program Proposal, the applicant's fiscal (Applicant) assures the following:

### **Supplement Not Supplant**

Funds provided under these programs will supplement, not supplant federal, state, and other local funds that the applicant would otherwise receive.

### **Legal Compliance/Debarment/Lobbying/Reporting**

Each program will be administered in accordance with all applicable federal and state statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications, which includes, but is not limited to, the relevant sections of EDGAR in Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations ("CFR") parts 74 through 86 and 97 through 99 (available online at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html>) and OMB circulars A-21, A-87, A-110, A-122, and A-133 (available online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>).

The control of funds provided under each program and title to property acquired with program funds will be in a public agency.

The Applicant will administer funds and property to the extent required by the authorizing statutes.

The Applicant will adopt and use proper methods of administering each such program, including: a) the enforcement of any obligations imposed by law on agencies, institutions, organizations, and other recipients responsible for carrying out each program; and b) the correction of deficiencies in program operations that are identified through the audits, monitoring, or evaluation.

The Applicant will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation of each such program conducted by or for the state educational agency, the Secretary of Education or other federal officials.

The Applicant will use such fiscal control and fund accounting procedures as will ensure proper disbursement of, and accounting for, federal and state funds paid to Applicant under each program.

The Applicant will make reports to the state educational agency and the Secretary of Education as may be necessary to enable the agency and the Secretary to perform their duties under each program.

The Applicant will maintain such records, provide such information, and afford access to the records as the state educational agency or the Secretary of Education may find necessary to carry out the state educational agency's or the Secretary's duties.

In accordance with Part 85 of 34 CFR, neither the Applicant nor its principals are presently debarred or suspended from participation in programs by any federal agency.

In accordance with Part 82 of 34 CFR, funds will not be used for lobbying the executive or legislative branches of the federal government in connection with contracts, grants, or loans and will report payments made with unappropriated funds for lobbying purposes.

The Applicant will comply with requirements of Sections 436 and 441 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA).

The Applicant will file reports in formats and at times specified by the Georgia Department of Education and/or the United States Department of Education.

The Applicant is in compliance with all required federal Civil Rights Statutes including: a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, or national origin; b) Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender; c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990,

which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. The text of the entire bill is available online at: <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/>.

**Professional Development**

The Applicant has adopted a policy that provides for the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive program for staff development.

**Technical Assistance**

The Applicant will provide technical assistance and support to programs identified in this application.

**Drug-Free Workplace and Community Act Amendments**

In accordance with the federal Drug-Free Workplace and Community Act Amendments of 1989, the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and State Board of Education Policy GAM, Staff Rights and Responsibilities: Drug and Alcohol Free Workforce, the Applicant declares that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance, marijuana, or dangerous drug is prohibited at geographic locations at which individuals are directly engaged in the performance of work pursuant to this application. In addition, Policy GAM prohibits the unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, or sale of alcohol.

## Special Education Program Specific Assurances

The applicant hereby certifies to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) that throughout the period of the grant award the representation made in this application properly reflects the projected expenditures to be incurred in the operation of the special education program for students with disabilities conducted within the local education agency (LEA), that the expenditures for services and goods will be made exclusively for the benefit of students who meet the eligibility criteria established by the GaDOE, and that personnel assignments and other documentation of expenses will be readily available for audit. All records necessary to ensure the correctness of the information provided by the agency will be kept five years beyond the final reporting date and access to such records will be provided to GaDOE personnel.

The LEA hereby assures the State Education Agency (SEA) that the LEA will comply with all amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and meet the lobbying, debarment, and drug-free workplace requirements in addition to each of the following conditions:

1. Special Education and Related Services will be provided in compliance with the established Federal and Georgia School Laws, Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards.
2. The LEA, in providing for the education of children with disabilities within its jurisdiction, has in effect policies, practices, procedures, and programs that are consistent with the state policies and procedures established under §612 of 20 USC 1400.
  - a. A free appropriate public education (FAPE) is available to all children with disabilities, as defined under §602(3) and who have a current individualized education program (IEP), residing in the LEA between the ages of 3 through 21, inclusive, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school. 612(a)(1)
  - b. The LEA has established a goal of providing full educational opportunity to all children with disabilities and a detailed timetable for accomplishing that goal. 612(a)(2)
  - c. All children with disabilities residing in the LEA, including children with disabilities who are homeless children, or are wards of the State, and children with disabilities attending private schools within the LEA jurisdiction, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated and a practical method is developed and implemented to determine which children with disabilities are currently receiving needed special education and related services. 612(a)(3)
  - d. An IEP or an individualized family service plan (IFSP) that meets the requirements of section 636(d), is developed, reviewed, and revised for each child with a disability in accordance with section 614(d). 612(a)(4)
  - e. To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 612(a)(5)(A)
  - f. Children with disabilities and their parents are afforded the procedural safeguards required by §615. 612(a)(6)
  - g. Children with disabilities are evaluated in accordance with subsections (a) through (c) of § 614. 612(a)(7)
  - h. The LEA will comply with §617(c) relating to the confidentiality of records and information. 612(a)(8)
  - i. Children participating in early intervention programs assisted under Part C and who will participate in preschool programs will experience a smooth and effective transition consistent with §637(a)(9).

- The LEA will participate in transition planning conferences arranged by the Lead Agency under §635(a)(10) and an IEP or, if consistent with sections 614(d)(2)(B) and 636(d), and IFSP will be developed and implemented by the third birthday. 612(a)(9)
- j. All requirements under §612(a)(10) regarding Children in Private Schools are being carried out in a manner consistent with the statute.
  - k. All requirements under §612(a)(25) regarding Prohibition on Mandatory Medication are being carried out in a manner consistent with the statute.
  - l. All personnel necessary to carry out IDEA are appropriately and adequately prepared, subject to the requirements of § 612(a)(14) and § 2122 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. 613(a)(3)
  - m. This LEA will either choose to coordinate with the National Instructional Materials Access Center when purchasing print instructional materials in accordance with section 612(a)(23) or will provide instructional materials to blind persons or other persons with print disabilities in a timely manner. 613(a)(6)
3. The LEA shall provide GaDOE with information necessary to enable the SEA to carry out its duties in Sections 612(a)(15) and 612 (a)(16), regarding its progress toward meeting targets on SEA established goals and indicators, as well as information relating to the performance of children with disabilities participating in assessments. 613(a)(7)
  4. The LEA shall make information available to parents of children with disabilities and to the general public regarding all documents relating to the eligibility of the LEA. 613(a)(8)
  5. The LEA shall cooperate with efforts under section 1308 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to ensure the linkage of records pertaining to migratory children with disabilities for the purpose of electronically exchanging, among the states, health and educational information regarding such children. 613(a)(9)
  6. Subject to section 613(b)(3), the LEA may have to modify its application to ensure that it is in compliance with any changes in IDEA provisions. 613(b)(2)
  7. The LEA shall ensure that all requirements under §613(a)(5) regarding treatment of Charter Schools and their students are being carried out in a manner consistent with the statute.
  8. Children with disabilities served with IDEA funds shall be counted in the same manner as children without disabilities to supplement the academic program funds earned and paid from the Quality Basic Education Program.
  9. The LEA shall ensure that funds provided under IDEA will be used to pay the excess cost of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities; shall be used to supplement the state, local and other federal funds and not to supplant such funds; and shall not be used, except as provided in §613(a)(2)(B)-(C) to reduce the level of expenditures. §613(a)(2)(A) and §612(a)(17)
  10. The LEA shall ensure that, according to Rule 160-4-7-.05 *Procedural Safeguards/Parent's Rights*, procedures for obtaining an independent education evaluation (IEE) upon parental request have been established and maintained. Any future revision to the IEE procedure will be submitted to the GaDOE for approval.
  11. The LEA shall ensure that, according to Rule 160-7-4-.11 *Personnel, Facilities, Equipment, Materials and Class Size*, the LEA caseload and class size standards have been previously submitted and approved

by the GaDOE. There have been no substantial changes since the original submission. (The State will review LEA caseload and class size standards for compliance.)

12. The LEA shall ensure that children with disabilities served with IDEA funds have at least the same average amount spent on them in local and state funds, as do the children in the LEA taken as a whole.
13. The LEA shall submit an annual continuous improvement plan based on performance goals and indicators to meet state targets. Any LEA with significant disproportionality in identification or placement of students with disabilities and the incidence of suspensions/expulsions must review and revise its policies, procedures, and practices as required in §618(d).

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